Fight against Fear

SOUTHERN JEWS AND BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS

Clive Webb

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Clive Webb

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INTRODUCTION

On January 17, 1987, Reverend Hosea Williams of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference led a small procession of demonstrators through Forsyth County, Georgia. They were there to protest the total exclusion of black residents in a county where the Ku Klux Klan had established its headquarters.

Seven days later, they returned. But now, instead of seventy black demonstrators walking through the all-white neighborhoods of Forsyth County, there were over twenty thousand, both black and white. It was the largest civil rights march in twenty years.

The involvement of so many concerned citizens owed much to the organizational skill of local Jewish activists. Members of various Jewish organizations including the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee had met with black leaders after the first march to coordinate a massive protest demonstration. Jews were also prominent among the marchers on January 24. Rabbi Alvin Sugarman had opened the doors of the Reform Temple in Atlanta to demonstrators who had arrived from out of town and had nowhere to stay. On the day of the march, he spoke of a special kinship between African Americans and Jews, one that united them in a collective struggle against all forms of prejudice. "We share a history of oppression with blacks," asserted Sugarman. "It's in different forms and to different degrees, but we know what it means to be an underclass, to be oppressed solely by virtue of birth—we as Jews, they as blacks." These sentiments were echoed by Rabbi Fred Raskind of Gadsden, Alabama. "Is this a Jewish issue? Of course it is! When anyone is excluded, how long does it take for us to be next?"[1]

Jews living in the American South had not always expressed such public support for civil rights. Thirty years earlier, their involvement in a demonstration such as that organized in Forsyth County would have been unthinkable.

Although most southern Jews were inherently sympathetic toward the black struggle for racial equality, their actions were constrained by political circumstances. In 1987, thousands of civil rights protesters could rally against southern racism without fear of violent reprisals. In 1957, those who dared to protest against racial prejudice risked serious personal injury. As a result, many southern Jews had explicitly rejected the notion that they had any particular responsibility to support the civil right movement. In stark contrast to the sentiments expressed by Rabbi Raskind thirty years later, their most common reaction to the Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation was to assert that it "concerns me solely as an American, not as a Jew, hence why do we have to go looking for Jewish angles on it?"[2]

Since the 1960s, historians, political scientists, and sociologists have sought to unravel the complex relationship between blacks and Jews in the United States. The approach adopted by these scholars has almost invariably been the same. Their concern is with the development and eventual disintegration of a supposed political alliance between the two peoples.

The alliance is said to have taken institutional shape through the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Among those who founded and later led the NAACP were a number of elite German Jews, including Henry Moskowitz, Lilian Wald, and Rabbi Stephen Wise.[3]

It was during the civil rights era that the alliance allegedly achieved its apex. Jews gave their time, their money, even—in the case of the martyred civil rights workers Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner—their lives in support of racial integration. Students, rabbis, and labor activists participated directly in southern civil rights campaigns. Northern Jews were also conspicuous by their membership in, and financial support of, civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality. Asserts Abraham Peck, "The American Jewish community played a major role in bringing about these changes and thought it was doing this as an equal partner with blacks in the march to freedom."[4]

What caused this alliance to crumble in the late 1960s has been the central question of almost every scholarly investigation of black-Jewish relations. Such is clear from the titles of two of the most recent works to appear on the subject, *What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance,* by Murray Friedman, and *Broken Alliance,* by Jonathan Kaufman. It is now acknowledged that problems between the two peoples existed long before the bitter arguments of the 1970s over affirmative action and Middle

Eastern foreign policy. Nonetheless, the idea that there was once a "golden era" of mutual support and understanding is still a given assumption. As Kaufman asks rhetorically in *Broken Alliance,* "What was it that first brought blacks and Jews together, and why have they now split so bitterly apart?"[5]

The black author Alice Walker has similarly explored this theme in her novel *Meridian.* Two of the central characters, Truman and Lynne, are former civil rights activists who meet during the Mississippi Freedom Summer project of 1964. The story of how they fall at first in and then, with the collapse of the civil rights movement, out of love appears to be emblematic of the broader relationship between blacks and Jews during these years.[6]

And yet should we so readily accept the existence of a black-Jewish alliance? Almost all of the existing studies have drawn their details from those cities such as New York and Chicago where the Jewish population is most heavily congregated and the prospect of cooperation or conflict with African Americans is most pronounced. This is to ignore an entire region of the United States: the American South.

Historian Raymond Mohl observes that there is a need for scholars to move the analysis of black-Jewish relations beyond the level of generality by focusing their scrutiny on specific communities.[7] This book examines the small but distinctive Jewish population of the southern states during the civil rights crisis of the mid-twentieth century. One of the central conclusions drawn from this intimate regional study is that the collaborative relationship between African Americans and Jews was confined to the level of national political leadership. Throughout the desegregation crisis that beset the South after the Second World War, African Americans and Jews in the region took no united action against racial segregation. In the southern states at least, there was never any political alliance between the two peoples.

Jews have lived and labored in the South for three hundred years. Four of their number first arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1697. Thirty-six years later, a more substantial band of settlers started a new life in the city of Savannah, Georgia. A third Jewish congregation, in Richmond, Virginia, was formally established in 1791. These settlers were predominantly Sephardic Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Their number rapidly assimilated into the dominant Gentile culture. A second stream of settlers began arriving in the early nineteenth century. These were largely Ashkenazi Jews from central and eastern Europe whose civil liberties had been suppressed.[8]

Even so, the South has never attracted a large number of Jewish immigrants. Jews have never constituted more than 1 percent of the region's popu-

lation. It is for this reason that their story remained untold for so many years. As the late Arnold Shankman argued in the early 1970s, "The bulk of that which can be labeled southern Jewish history has been filiopietistic, inaccurate, or irrelevant. Even worse it has been almost non-existent."[9]

The earliest writings on the subject all conformed to the same set pattern. Their authors shared an identical agenda, hoping to establish the credentials of southern Jews as respectable and industrious citizens. The contentious issue of race relations was often ignored altogether.[10]

The trend continues even today. In 1994, Carolyn Gray LeMaster published *A Corner of the Tapestry,* a history of Jews in Arkansas. "The overwhelming majority of Jews added only good to our state," LeMaster enthused in her introduction. She then described the establishment of every Jewish retail store in every small town throughout Arkansas. The more contentious subject of Jewish attitudes toward African Americans is given only a cursory analysis. Key words such as *slavery* and *Jim Crow* do not even appear in the index.[11]

Nonetheless, during the past few decades, works on southern Jewry have grown, both in quantity and in quality. The 1950s saw a small band of pioneers beat a lonely path in search of greater historical understanding. Foremost among them were Bertram Korn and Jacob Rader Marcus. Korn wrote a series of seminal works, including studies of the Jewish communities in antebellum Mobile and New Orleans. His study of Jewish involvement in the slave system, published in 1961, is still the only serious scholarly treatment of the subject.[12]

Slowly Jews were being painted back into the historical landscape of the South. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new generation of historians added increasingly rich tones to the brush strokes applied by Korn and Marcus.[13]

The single most important piece of scholarship on southern Jews was an article by Leonard Dinnerstein entitled "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954–1968." The article revealed that in the southern states there had never been any sort of alliance between African Americans and Jews. Dinnerstein portrayed southern Jews as a people torn between their innate sympathy for the civil rights struggle and their vulnerability as a persecuted minority. The South has historically been home to the most ethnically homogeneous white population in the United States. On account of their ethnic origin, their political affiliation, and above all their religion, Jews occupied a marginal status within southern white society. Their acceptance as whites was entirely conditional upon their continued compliance with the prevailing social order. As Dinnerstein has elsewhere asserted, "By always watching them-

selves and never engaging in activities that might antagonize members of the dominant society, Jews hoped to avoid public discomfort." In particular this meant compliance with the subordination of the black race. Although privately many Jews opposed segregation, publicly they allowed their silence to be taken as an uncritical endorsement of the status quo.[14]

The precarious political status of southern Jews was starkly exposed in the furor surrounding the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation. The civil rights crisis sparked an explosion of anti-Semitic extremism across the South. Segregationists accused "Communist Jews" of having masterminded a conspiracy to destroy democratic government in the region. The threat of violent retaliation forced southern Jews into an uneasy silence throughout the civil rights struggle. As the author of one influential study argued in the 1960s, while some southern Jews took active and competing sides in the civil rights conflict, most felt caught in the middle.[15]

This portrayal of southern Jews as a weak and ineffectual force in the fight against racial inequality remained the prevailing orthodoxy for over twenty-five years. Not until 1997 did a revisionist interpretation emerge with the publication of *The Quiet Voices,* an anthology on southern rabbis and black civil rights edited by Mark Bauman and Berkley Kalin. Bauman and Kalin did not set out to rebuild the basic model established by Leonard Dinnerstein. They agreed that most southern Jews had been intimidated into silence by anti-Semitic extremists. Nevertheless, they argued persuasively that a conspicuous minority of southern Jews, most notably their religious leaders, did play an important and unjustly forgotten role in the struggle against racial segregation.[16]

Fight against Fear seeks to build on the revisionist argument of Bauman and Kalin. It too assumes that the majority of southern Jews were motivated solely by the desire for self-preservation. The reaction of southern Jews to the desegregation crisis was nonetheless much more complex and contradictory than this rather generalized assertion will allow. Dinnerstein himself recognized that there were sharp divisions among southern Jews. Those living in larger and more cosmopolitan cities such as Houston and Atlanta were less at risk of retaliation than their rural and small-town counterparts. At the time of the Supreme Court decision, 29,349 or 14.7 percent of all southern Jews lived in communities where their number was less than 1,000. Since this figure excludes those communities in which there were less than one hundred Jews, the actual percentage is somewhat higher. The pressures of political conformity in these small towns were too powerful for the isolated Jewish popula-

tion to resist. They especially were forced to suffer in silence throughout the desegregation struggle.[17]

Several other factors served to complicate the reaction of southern Jews. The most serious was the division over the morality of racial segregation. In a broad sense this conflict can be defined in generational terms. Historians have not fully acknowledged the extent to which many southern Jews supported racial segregation not out of fear but out of genuine ideological conviction. Older Jews who could trace their roots back several generations had long since adapted to its racial mores. As Rabbi James Wax of Memphis asserted, "Almost all native-born Southerners whose families lived in the South for two or more generations have segregationist attitudes." By contrast, younger Jews who had only recently settled in the South tended to be more liberal and less willing to accept white supremacy.[18]

Southern Jews were also divided along denominational lines. Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews all shared a common sense of historical suffering that sensitized them to the plight of other peoples plagued by racial and religious bigotry. As Seth Forman affirms, "A unique history of persecution appears to have imbued Jews with a more conscious recognition that values of individual freedom, political and religious liberty, and civic equality are matters of paramount concern."[19] However, Conservative and Orthodox Jews were not as committed to liberal causes as Reform Jews.

This book attempts to capture the deeply ambiguous response of southern Jews to the desegregation crisis. Chapters 1 and 2 trace the historical relationship between African Americans and Jews in the South from slavery to the Second World War. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 assess the moral dilemma that confronted southern Jews during the civil rights struggle. Although southern Jews were generally supportive of the Supreme Court decision, many were scared by the massive resistance movement. In a desperate act of self-preservation, they also sought to curtail the civil rights activities of their northern coreligionists. The problem was particularly acute for Jewish businessmen. When black demonstrators demanded that Jews desegregate their businesses, segregationists responded by threatening brutal reprisals. Jewish retailers were torn between their personal belief in the morality of desegregation and the pressing reality of economic boycott and terrorist attack. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 provide the main point of departure from the Dinnerstein interpretation of southern Jews. Chapter 6 focuses on those southern Jews who publicly supported the massive resistance movement. While some Jews joined segregationist organizations such as the White Citizens' Council

purely as a means of self-protection, others did so because they were staunch advocates of white supremacy. Chapter 6 analyzes the three most infamous Jewish segregationists and seeks to assess how they reconciled their status as members of a persecuted minority with their own prejudiced attitude toward African Americans. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, chapters 7 and 8 consider the civil rights activism of a small but conspicuous minority of southern Jews. Chapter 7 focuses on the role of Jewish women in the struggle to desegregate public schools; chapter 8 assesses the contribution of southern rabbis to a broad array of civil rights issues. Together these two chapters reconsider the stereotypical depiction of southern Jews as a people paralyzed by fear and point to a much more complex picture. Social and political pressures prevented any organizational alliance between African Americans and Jews in the southern states. Collaboration did, however, take place on a less formal level. In particular, southern Jews responded positively to the particular crises that beset the broader communities in which they lived. They acted alone or in small numbers. Some worked together with black activists, others in parallel with them. But they shared the same political purpose: the desegregation of the South.

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1 FROM SLAVERY TO SEGREGATION

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the racial attitudes of southern Jews were determined above all else by their relationship with the white Gentile majority. Anti-Semitism has never been a pervasive force in southern life. As a result, Jews secured widespread acceptance within the white community. As the historian John Higham observes, the South has been "historically the section least inclined to ostracize Jews."[1]

Several factors account for this. Among the most significant are the Old Testament roots of southern Christianity. The fundamentalist Protestantism of the South was deeply ambivalent in its depiction of Jews. Jews were vilified as Christ killers, but they were also venerated as God's chosen people. As Morris Abram remembered of his childhood in rural Georgia, "In those times devout fundamentalist Protestants would sometimes grasp a Jew to their bosom, seeing him as a member of the original biblical race."[2] White southerners were also willing in spite of their general animus toward Jews to accept them individually. As Jonathan Sarna has argued, whites often drew a sharp distinction between the mythic Shylock and Christ Killer and those Jews they met on a personal basis. A case in point is the close relationship between the southern aristocrat Mary Chesnut and her friend Miriam Cohen. As Cohen remarked in response to the suggestion that she convert to Christianity: "Now, you despise a Jew in your heart. Don't answer—I know you do. You like me, but that is in spite of my being one."[3]

The relative lack of anti-Semitism is principally explained by the fact that so few Jews settled in the region. Jews never constituted more than a tiny percentage of the southern population. Their desire for social acceptance ensured their compliance with the laws and customs of their adopted homeland. In particular this involved their acceptance of slavery and then racial segregation. Jews were successfully integrated into southern society, since they posed no cultural or political challenge to white hegemony.[4]

JEWISH MASTERS, BLACK SLAVES

In 1862, the abolitionist clergyman Calvin Fairbank was released from prison after serving time for assisting runaway slaves. As he journeyed north from Kentucky, Fairbank overheard two of his fellow train passengers debate the subject of his release. One of these passengers was "a Jew farmer" by the name of Ben Gratz. According to the boastful Gratz, "All I'd ask would be one pop at him. I'd shoot him as soon as I would a wolf." When Fairbank intervened, asking Gratz if he would recognize the villain if he saw him, the farmer said yes. "'Well,' said I, 'here I am'; showing my revolver and resting it on the back of the seat in our front. But you'll have to be mighty sharp; for I think I have the first pop." Gratz, recognizing that he did not exactly hold the advantage, was obliged to ask Fairbank if he would shake hands and dismiss the whole thing as a joke.[5]

In his pugnacious opposition to abolitionism, Ben Gratz encapsulated the political spirit of southern slaveholders. The fact that this Kentucky farmer was a Jew emphasized the prevailing influence of white southern culture upon the Jewish population of the region. In particular, many southern Jews actively supported the institution of slavery. They were indistinguishable from other whites in terms of their attitude and behavior toward the enslaved black populace.

The best available source on Jewish slave ownership is the 1820 census. Of 223 Jewish heads of household, almost 80 percent owned at least one slave. The average number of slaves belonging to each household was more than four.[6] Although the figure is fractionally higher than that of the typical Gentile family, one should not grant this too much significance. The majority of southern Jews were urban dwellers. Since slave ownership was on average slightly higher in the cities than in the countryside, the scale of Jewish slave ownership was no more than a reflection of their residential patterns. More significant is the fact that with only a few exceptions Jews did not rank among the large slaveholding elite. Of twelve thousand whites who owned fifty or more slaves in 1830, only twenty were Jewish. Even in the cities, the number of southern Jews was so small that they exerted no more than a marginal influence over slavery.[7]

In seeking to analyze Jewish attitudes toward slavery, it is important to stress the paucity and poor quality of the sources. The methodological problems posed to the scholar are most clearly illustrated by the plantation records of Marx E. Cohen. Cohen owned one thousand acres on the Ashley River in

South Carolina, fourteen miles from the city of Charleston. Although his records are the most extensive bequeathed by any Jewish slaveholder, they are singularly unenlightening. The son of a Polish emigrant, Marx Cohen was born in 1810. From names included on a sick list dated from May 1, 1845, it is clear that he owned at least twenty-four field hands. The size of his labor force was sufficiently large for him to employ an overseer. But why did Marx Cohen become a slave owner? How did he reconcile the exploitation of other human beings with his religious faith? Did he indeed experience any such conflict of interest? We simply do not know. Cohen's record of the daily events on his plantation tells us far more about farming methods in the rice districts of South Carolina than it does about his attitude toward the institution of slavery.[8]

Such are the constraints imposed by the sources that any assessment of Jewish attitudes toward slavery must remain impressionistic. There can nonetheless be little dispute that many southern Jews endorsed slavery. Richmond merchant Samuel Myers criticized "the impracticability of any plan of emancipation" on the assumption that African Americans would rapidly be threatened with extinction if forced to compete on an open basis with whites. Such sentiments were echoed by Montgomery Moses of Sumter, South Carolina. Writing after the Civil War, Moses asserted that emancipation would prove a disaster, since African Americans were still in a state of utter dependency. As he exclaimed, "Unless a very great reaction shall take place, I look forward to an extermination of the race, in less than . . . thirty years."[9]

It is true that a number of southern Jews expressed strong reservations about slavery. Among those who spoke out against the system were Judge Solomon Heydenfelt and Maj. Alfred Mordecai. Mordecai denounced slavery, declaring it "the greatest misfortune and curse that could have befallen us." Yet neither man was motivated by any sense of moral revulsion against slavery. In both instances, their opposition to the system was based strictly on economics. As Heydenfelt reasoned, slavery should be abolished because African Americans were unproductive workers suitable only for cultivating cotton and sugar. Southern industry would continue to stagnate so long as the peculiar institution survived. By contrast, Heydenfelt did not see slavery as contravening the tenets of his religion. His racial attitudes were in truth indistinguishable from those of other white southerners. Although alarmed at the impact of slavery on the southern economy, Heydenfelt was at pains to point out "the necessity of keeping in the only proper mode of subjection a class which otherwise will become a fearful nuisance."[10]

Only one genuine example exists of Jews actively conspiring against slavery. During the 1840s, Isaac and Peter Friedman assisted Peter Still's escape from Tuscumbia, Alabama. However, even this appears to have been an isolated incident born out of personal sentiment for a particular slave rather than any ideological opposition to the institution of slavery.[11]

The risk of retaliation prevented Jews from taking the initiative on an issue as sensitive as slavery. At the same time, whenever racial attitudes among the white community took a more progressive turn, the more enlightened Jewish masters moved in discreet accordance. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the egalitarian ideals of the American Revolution inspired slaveholders in the northern and southern states to emancipate their bondsmen. The records reveal a number of Jewish masters whose consciences were troubled by the contradiction between the rhetoric of individual liberty and the reality of slave ownership. "Being of the opinion that all men are by nature equally free," Isaiah Isaacs of Charlottesville, Virginia, ordered that his slaves be emancipated upon his death.[12] Accordingly, when tighter controls were imposed on manumission, Jews immediately stepped into line with the changing political and legal climate. One exception was Judah Touro, the noted Jewish philanthropist from New Orleans. According to his biographer, Touro on occasion purchased slaves for the sole purpose of then emancipating them.[13]

Southern Jews clearly did not conform to any single defining pattern of behavior. In seeking to explain their individual attitudes toward slavery, class appears to be a more influential factor than religion. Affluent urban Jews openly embraced the system, purchasing slaves as status symbols.[14] Poorer Jews, by contrast, were prepared to flout the restrictive racial codes of the South precisely because they impeded their opportunities for economic advancement. Jewish peddlers and small storekeepers aroused the anger of whites by openly trading with African Americans. Frederick Law Olmsted, the northern architect, reported that Jewish immigrants were encouraging far too great a feeling of familiarity between blacks and whites. "A swarm of Jews," he raged, "within the last ten years has settled in nearly every Southern town, many of them men of no character, opening cheap clothing and trinket shops, running or driving out of business many of the old retailers, and engaging in an unlawful trade with the simple negroes, which is found very profitable."[15] During his tour of the United States in the 1850s, Charles Mackay met General Gadsden, a South Carolina plantation owner. Gadsden's only neighbors were a family of German Jews who lived in a small log hut on the edge of his estate.

Much to his consternation, the general reported that these Jews engaged in elicit trade with his slaves. "They resort to places like this with property which they steal from their masters," Gadsden exclaimed of bondsmen throughout the region, "and which the men exchange, at most nefarious profit to the Jew receiver, for whisky and tobacco and which the females barter for ribbons and tawdry finery."[16]

Those Jews who did invest in slavery demonstrated no significant difference from other white southerners in their treatment of slaves. Despite accusations to the contrary, there was no identifiably Jewish mode of behavior toward bondsmen.

One such accusation came from the English traveler J. Benwell, who asserted that Jews were responsible for some of the worst excesses of the system. "I was informed," wrote Benwell, "that many of the slaves belonging to Jews were sent out, and compelled on the Saturday night to bring in a much larger sum than it was reasonably possible the poor creatures could earn, and if not successful, they were subjected to the most cruel treatment."[17]

These observations tell us little about Jewish masters but a lot about the anti-Semitic prejudices of J. Benwell. There is no evidence that Jews were especially harsh taskmasters. On the contrary, far from conforming to any identifiable pattern, Jews treated their slaves according to their own individual consciences. The ethnic and religious identity of Jewish masters was not the determining factor in their relationship with African American slaves. There was therefore no typical Jewish master. As with all white southerners, some treated their slaves with kindness, others with cruelty. On the one hand were slaveholders such as Solomon Cohen who, in learning that his servant Diana had fallen seriously ill, lost no time in calling on the services of the most prominent physician in Savannah. Much to his distress, not even the best treatment money could buy was enough to save Diana.[18] On the other hand are stories of Jewish masters who exposed their slaves to extreme brutality. Most horrifyingly, Joseph Cohen of Lynchburg, Virginia, was convicted in 1818 for the murder in the second degree of a slave.[19] Although an extreme example, there are other recorded instances of slaves suffering cruelty and neglect at the hands of Jewish masters, including the arbitrary separation and sale of black families.[20] An entry in the diary of Texas retail merchant Adolphus Sterne is revealing: "Had a devil of a rompuss with the negro woman Susan, after giving her a sound beating which she well deserved—she absquatolated to furrin parts." As these scattered examples suggest, Jewish masters adhered to no common standard of treatment toward their slaves.[21]

More conclusive is the evidence on Jewish involvement in the slave trade. Just as Jews were accused of mistreating their slaves, so they were also alleged to have controlled the buying and selling of slave labor. "It cannot be disputed," observed the historian Herman Schuricht, "that Jews have been foremost among the foreign-born population of Virginia in advocating the secession movement—being interested in the 'Negro trade.' The largest auction-house in Richmond for the sale of slaves was owned by a Jew."[22]

That particular establishment belonged to Hector Davis, who was indeed reputed to be the most prosperous "auctioneer and commission merchant for the sale of negroes" in Richmond. Together with his many brothers, Davis helped to found something of a Jewish slave-trading dynasty. Four other members of the Davis family—Benjamin, John, Robert, and Solomon—worked alongside Hector in Richmond. Thomas N. Davis headed north to Alexandria, where he too established himself as a slave trader. To the south, in Petersburg, operated another three members of the family, Ansley, George, and Henry.[23]

Nor were the Davises by any means the only Jews to deal in slaves. Bertram Korn lists twenty-five individuals or partnerships acting as auctioneers or commission merchants, but there appear to have been a good many more. While Ash Levy and Samuel Reese similarly based their businesses in Richmond, others established operations across the South. Isaac Isaacs of Mobile, Alabama, enjoyed a prosperous partnership with a Gentile, Charles Deshon. The brothers I. I. and S. I. Jones were also from Mobile. Other auction and commission merchants included Benjamin Mordecai of Charleston, A. S. Levy of Memphis, Jacob and Isaac Soria of Natchez, Aaron Hirsch and Simon Adler of Batesville, Arkansas, and Abraham Block of Washington, Arkansas. Mervyn Sterne further recalled how his father, upon arriving in Albany, Georgia, shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War, established a general store that bought and sold both cotton and slaves.[24] Jews also benefited from slave labor by acting as commission merchants. A number of Jews made their living through the buying and selling of cotton, among the most successful being Herbert Lehman and Brothers of Montgomery, Alabama.[25]

Nonetheless, Jews played a relatively minor role in the domestic slave trade. According to Frederic Bancroft, of forty-two auctioneers and brokers advertising their services in Charleston in 1860, only four were Jewish. Similarly, despite the dominance of the Davises in Richmond, between 1858 and 1860 only five of the seventy slave traders in the city were Jews. Given the size of the southern Jewish population, these figures do suggest that a dispropor-

tionately large number of Jews were involved in the slave trade. At the same time they also demonstrate that the speculation in slaves would have flourished with or without the involvement of Jewish merchants.[26] It should also be stressed that Jewish traders were small in number as well as scale. Taken together, the total number of slaves bought and sold by Jewish speculators is still smaller than that of the largest slave trading firm in the South, Franklin and Armfield.[27]

BECOMING SOUTHERN

That southern Jews did not resist the slave system is not surprising. The political and cultural environment of the Old South was in no way conducive to racial nonconformity. During the 1820s, there were more antislavery societies in the South than in the North. By the following decade, however, the movement had become all but extinct below the Mason-Dixon line. The emergence of an increasingly militant antislavery movement in the North created a siege mentality among white southerners. Those not born and bred in the region were suspected of subversive racial beliefs. As the traveler John Silk Buckingham observed in 1839, "Everywhere throughout the South, slavery is a topic upon which no man, and above all, a foreigner, can open his lips without imminent personal danger, unless it is to defend and uphold the system."[28]

Confronted with such a hostile political climate, Jews had little choice but to accept slavery. Those who did harbor doubts about the ethics of the slave system kept such thoughts to themselves for fear of provoking an anti-Semitic backlash.[29] Gary Zola has indeed suggested that at times this determination to avoid conflict caused southern Jews to support slavery even more aggressively than other whites.[30]

At best Jews were able to engage only in acts of passive protest, refusing to buy or trade in slaves themselves but not daring to criticize those who did. One case in point is Lazarus Straus, a store owner in the small town of Talbotton, Georgia. Although he employed a number of servants, Straus was strongly opposed to the institution of slavery. To this end he set about buying each of the servants in turn and teaching them a trade. "If we children spoke to the slaves harshly or disregarded their feelings," his son later recalled, "we were promptly checked and reprimanded by our parents."[31] Although he may have entertained ideas of liberating the slaves, Straus was in no position to do so. Manumission was scorned by convention and prohibited by law. Only

within the confines of slavery could Straus bestow greater kindnesses upon his bondsmen. A more activist stance would have risked retaliation, jeopardizing the security not only of the slaves but of Straus himself.

Those who criticize Jews for not having done more to resist the system therefore risk imposing unrealistic historical standards. We know from such historians as Michael Johnson, James Roark, and Larry Koger that even free blacks bought into the slave system. Since the pursuit of power and profit could entice blacks into supporting slavery, it is not surprising that Jews should have also adapted to the system.[32]

It is nonetheless insufficient to argue that the status of Jews as a vulnerable minority forced them to accept the institution of slavery. A number of historians have suggested that there was something in the nature of the immigrants themselves that ensured their support for the system. Jews were motivated above all by a desire for social acceptance. Jewish law did not forbid the practice of slavery. At the same time, by investing in the system, southern Jews were able not only to accrue considerable economic advantages but also to consolidate their racial status within the white community. As Mark Greenberg has argued, "The perennial outsider in European society, Jews in the South hoped to become insiders by positioning themselves relative to blacks. By possessing bondsmen Jews revealed their commitment to a mainstay of antebellum Southern life and thus were not perceived as a threat to established cultural patterns."[33]

Southern Jews did not succeed entirely in eroding anti-Semitism. When Thomas Butler King was beaten by a Jew on the purchase of a rice plantation at St. Simon's Island in Georgia, his mother remarked that "it would not be so bad" had his rival been a "genteel Christian." The idea of having such a "vulgar upstart" as a neighbor was "revolting in the extreme." Similarly, Emma Holmes of Charleston wrote in her diary that she disliked vacationing in Sumter on account of "the prevalence of sand & Jews, my great abhorrences."[34] Most striking of all was an incident involving James Henry Hammond, governor of South Carolina. In September 1844, Hammond issued a gubernatorial proclamation naming the first Thursday of October as a day of Thanksgiving to "God the Creator, and his son Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World." When Charleston Jews petitioned Hammond in protest, he not only refused to alter the wording of the proclamation but publicly condemned Jews for having inherited "the same scorn for Jesus Christ which instigated their ancestors to crucify him."[35]

Despite these occasional outbursts, anti-Semitism was a relatively latent

force in southern life. By adapting to the racial mores of the region, southern Jews succeeded to a large extent in deflecting ethnic and religious prejudice. A society based upon the subordination of the black race could only be preserved through the maintenance of white political unity. The planter elite was therefore determined to instill a common racial identity among whites regardless of their cultural differences. In this sense the continued presence of slavery served as a safeguard for Jews because it mitigated the growth of anti-Semitism. The degradation of African American slaves served as a vessel for Jewish absorption into the social, political, and economic life of the South.[36]

Politics provides a particularly compelling example. Although Jews were denied the franchise in North Carolina until 1868,[37] they otherwise played an active role in southern politics. The first Jew elected to public office in the South was David Emanuel, who was sworn in as the sixth governor of Georgia on March 3, 1801. Other prominent Jewish politicians included Alabama congressman Philip Phillips, Louisiana lieutenant governor Henry Hyams, and Mordecai De Leon of Columbia, South Carolina, the first Jew elected mayor of a major American city. The active involvement of southern Jews in local, state, and national politics contrasted vividly with the political exclusion suffered by their coreligionists not only in Europe but also in the North.[38]

Most striking of all were the political careers of David Levy Yulee and Judah P. Benjamin. Yulee served as congressman of Florida from 1841 until its admission as a state four years later, at which time he was elected senator. In 1852 Benjamin was elected senator of Louisiana. "It is a singular fact," observed the *Western Democrat,* "that the most masterly expositions which have been made of the constitutional and religious argument for slavery are from gentlemen of the Hebrew faith." Both Yulee and Benjamin were staunch advocates of slavery. Benjamin purchased a large sugar plantation in Louisiana with a labor force of 140 slaves. Yulee earned a reputation as the "Florida Fire Eater" for his passionate speeches in support of the South, especially his campaign to expand slavery through the territorial annexation of Mexico and Cuba.[39]

Neither Judah Benjamin nor David Yulee were representative of southern Jews. Both men abandoned their religion and married outside of the faith. Nevertheless, by the eve of the American Civil War, most southern Jews were integrated into the slave system. Their racial attitudes were in turn informed by their societal status. Jews shared little if any of the suffering of African Americans. Poor immigrant peddlers only recently settled in the South may have breached racial etiquette by trading on a familiar basis with slaves, but

the same could not be said of more established and affluent Jews. In their case, differences in class and race imposed insuperable barriers between themselves and blacks, not only during the antebellum era but decades beyond the collapse of the peculiar institution. At the same time, Jews were so small in number that their presence in the South had no discernible impact on the institution of slavery. Slavery was not so much influenced by southern Jews as southern Jews were influenced by slavery.

The status of Jews as members of the ruling elite was underlined by the arguments of proslavery ideologists who used them as an example of the intellectual superiority of whites over blacks. Writing soon after the Civil War, George Fitzhugh demanded that black tenant farmers be resubjugated on the grounds that they were incapable of struggling against adversity. In drawing a distinction between the deficiencies of blacks and the superior capabilities of whites, Fitzhugh used the example of the Jew. "Contrast the history of the Jews with that of the negroes," he wrote. "The Jews, one of the most intellectual varieties of the white race, have been subjected to persecution, put under more social, political, and religious disadvantages than all other races; yet despite all this, they are to-day probably more free from crime, pauperism, and immorality, more wealthy and more enlightened, than any other nation of equal numbers." In the Old South, the subordination of the African American assisted the social elevation of the Jew.[40]

THE CIVIL WAR

Nothing better defines the depth of Jewish support for the South and the institution of slavery than the Civil War. Southern Jews were staunch supporters of secession and war.[41] Several assumed eminent positions within the Confederate government. David Camden De Leon was appointed surgeon general soon after the outbreak of war. His brother Edwin served as an overseas representative struggling unsuccessfully to persuade European governments to grant the Confederacy diplomatic status. Most famously of all, Judah P. Benjamin served successively as secretary of war and of state.[42] In addition to these high-ranking officials were the many less familiar figures who enlisted in the Confederate army. According to one conservative estimate, 1,216 southern Jews took up arms in defense of their homeland. Many distinguished themselves on the battlefield, some making the ultimate sacrifice.[43]

What reasons did Jews have for so zealously supporting secession? Leopold

Weil, a cotton merchant from Montgomery, wrote to his brother Josiah in May 1861 that he had freed all his slaves except for his house servants. "In truth," he confessed, "one man never has right another man to own. But one man has no right to sell property to another and after he has invested the proceeds claim that the buyer is evil and should divest himself of his property. . . . Of two evils I choose the one more familiar. This land has been good to all of us. . . . I shall fight to my last breath and to the full extent of my fortune to defend that in which I believe." As this letter reveals, there were a number of reasons why Jews championed the Confederate cause. Like many southern Jews, Leopold Weil attained privilege and prosperity through the exploitation of slave labor. The South also offered safe haven to thousands of Jews who fled persecution in Europe. Although Weil recognized that slavery was immoral, he was not prepared to abandon a land that "has been good to all of us." Through their loyal support for secession, southern Jews therefore hoped to reinforce their social acceptance. By the time Weil wrote to his brother, he had already enlisted as a lieutenant in the Confederate army.[44]

The Civil War nonetheless proved a severe test of southern Jewish loyalties. The war witnessed an unprecedented explosion of anti-Semitic prejudice, largely as a result of the federal blockade imposed by the Lincoln administration. Lincoln ordered the cessation of all trade with the seceded states on April 16, 1861. A blockade of southern ports was eventually enforced by over six hundred ships. The effects of the blockade threw southerners into a panic. Prices rose as products became harder to come by. This, together with an ever-increasing fear of defeat, led to a lack of faith in Confederate money, the value of which declined dramatically as an oversupply of notes flooded the market. The increasing circulation of counterfeit notes exacerbated inflation even further.[45]

Southerners were in little doubt as to who was responsible for their economic woes. Speculators were blamed for seizing stocks of vital commodities, driving folk into near hysteria over shortages, and then selling their supplies at vastly inflated prices. As to the identity of these speculators, the *Richmond Enquirer* asserted that throughout the Confederacy anguished citizens could be heard to cry: "Will the Government leave us helpless in the hands of all these Jews?"[46]

Despite these accusations of disloyalty, Jews remained steadfast in their support for the Confederate cause. As army officer Simon Mayer asserted in a letter written during the last year of the war, the Lincoln administration, "not satisfied with burning our towns, and endeavoring to carry out their hellish

designs of starving our people in subjection . . . now want to carry out their new doctrine of 'miscegenation.'" Mayer urged his brother to enlist in the Confederate army before this "evil" befell the South.[47]

When defeat finally came, Jews felt no less devastated than did their fellow southerners. The enforced emancipation of their slaves left them feeling both bewildered and betrayed. Southern Jews and Gentiles alike experienced the agony of what Eugene Genovese has termed "the moment of truth," when came a shattering of the illusion that the slaves were satisfied with their lot.[48] Emma Mordecai was typical in having always assumed that slaves reciprocated the love she was sure had been bestowed upon them. Staying with her sister-in-law, Rose, in Virginia, an exasperated Mordecai wrote in her diary of how one morning, a servant called Mary "took out her bed, and *never* came back."[49] On the day her servants left, Eleanor Cohen of Charleston wrote in her diary: "I, who believe in the institution of slavery, regret deeply its being abolished. I am accustomed to have them wait on me, and I dislike white servants very much."[50]

RECONSTRUCTION

The bloodiest war in American history ended, four years after it began, with the surrender of Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. Yet long after the physical fighting was over, the ideological battle raged on in the minds of many southerners. The North had abolished slavery without destroying the white supremacist dogma that had established and sustained it. White southerners continued to believe that slavery was a system to which African Americans were naturally conditioned. The resubjugation of the former slaves became a political and psychological imperative.

Jews did not share the same agony in defeat as did other white southerners. The Civil War was a disaster for the South in both human and economic costs. Jews were not spared from the suffering. Writing in the New York *Jewish Messenger,* Samuel Isaacs described "the ruin and misery that have become the lot of hundreds of formerly affluent Hebrew families."[51] Despite these setbacks, the postbellum era witnessed a dramatic expansion in organized Jewish life across the South. Jewish businessmen responded immediately to the opportunities provided by rapprochement with the North. Business and family ties between southern and northern Jews were rapidly restored after the war. The migration of northern merchants bolstered the size and strength of the Jewish

community throughout the former Confederacy. Relative to other whites, the poverty and despair of southern Jews was relatively short-lived. They did not experience the same bitterness born of defeat that provoked such a violent reaction to Reconstruction. While many white southerners reflected on better times before the war, Jews looked more optimistically to the future.[52]

Notwithstanding the general response of southern Jews, a number of individuals expressed vehement opposition to the new social order. According to David Yulee, the Reconstructionist policies of the Republican Party were an unwarranted assault upon the proud people of the South that would provoke "a conflict that will end in the extermination of one of the races."[53] Outrage at the enforced imposition of equal rights for African Americans was shared by many southern Jews. J. H. Levy of Savannah wrote to his daughters in March 1868 that federal troops would not listen to local leaders, their sole purpose being "to direct and change" the region "to negro ascendancy making in time the south unfit for white people, should we not be fortunate enough to succeed so that common sense & common decency reverse the country from disgrace."[54] "Our political situation here is now altogether frightful," Meyer Goldman's son wrote to a friend in October 1874. "It seems that Negroes are streaming into Louisiana from other states far and wide, and are building up here the so-called 'Republican Party,' and are also stirring up much trouble." Almost every office in the state government, exclaimed Goldman, was occupied by an African American, and those whites who did hold power were the most base and corrupt of their kind. The situation had become so intolerable that he was closing his law practice and moving north to Louisville, Kentucky.[55]

Other Jews were determined to stand and fight. Driven by anger and resentment, they engaged in acts of terrorist violence against the Republican state governments. A small number of southern Jews, for instance, enlisted in the Ku Klux Klan.[56] Others, including Edwin Moise and H. H. De Leon, were members of the Red Shirts, an organization that used violence and intimidation to restore Democratic rule in South Carolina.[57]

Although former masters were forced to accept that slavery was dead, few failed to mourn its passing. Instead, many southerners turned nostalgically back toward the good old days before the war. Now that they were no longer under the strict control of their masters, the former slaves were accused of deliberately undermining plantation discipline, their approach to work characterized by indolence and insolence. Searching for the sense of stability enshrined in the racial order of the antebellum era, whites started to sing sweet

hymns of praise to the peculiar institution. Jews were among those who added their voices in memory of the old order. In the opening pages of his *Reminiscences of Charleston,* Jacob Nunez Cardozo sent his heart out to those planters whose lives had been devastated by the Civil War. "There was a species of patriarchal relation in the mode of life when surrounded by his household slaves," reflected the aging economist and newspaper editor, "in that reciprocity of protection and obedience that exists between master and servant." Where once there had been harmony between blacks and whites, now there was only discord.[58]

Adding to the lament for a lost way of life was former Confederate diplomat Edwin De Leon. He argued that slavery had succeeded in the South because it worked to the mutual benefit of masters and servants alike. In return for their labor, owners assumed responsibility for their slaves' welfare, providing them with clean cabins, plenty of food, and medical help. Compared with the northern free laborer and his employer, a slave and his master thus came to experience an emotional, not just contractual, bond. As De Leon described it, the dutiful master managed in the process not so much to civilize the bestial African as to domesticate him like any other pet. The slave, he declared, was "a purely animal creature," who showed a "spaniel-like affection" for his owner.[59]

So meritorious a system had slavery been in the eyes of most southerners that few cared to consider that their cause had been anything but a worthy one. That secession had been, at the very least, politically misguided, if not morally wrong, was never a consideration. Instead, the myth of the "Lost Cause" soon seized the southern consciousness. Mourning for, and remembrance of, the Confederate dead became commonplace. In every important southern town, war memorials were erected, usually in the statuesque form of a young Confederate soldier staring defiantly northwards.[60]

Jews actively contributed to the Lost Cause. Like their Gentile neighbors, they constructed elaborate memorials to the Confederate dead. The soldiers' section of the Jewish cemetery in Richmond offered such solemn celebration, its railings adorned with crossed swords and sabers, wreathed with laurel.[61] Seventeen years of Civil War and Reconstruction only served to strengthen the emotional bond that southern Jews felt for their adopted homeland. Their sense of loyalty to the southern social order remained unshakeable. Newspaper editor Herbert Ezekiel was not alone in his assertion that there was a special kinship between the Jewish people and the South. As he argued, the fate of the former Confederates was akin to that of God's chosen people, an

oppressed minority who had suffered unjustly at the hands of a tyrannical majority. "Like Jews have often been, they were crushed by irresistible odds, but the cause is still alive . . . its sacredness will be inviolable so long as the sun shines in this fair land of ours."[62]

NEW SOUTH, OLD TROUBLES

During the early twentieth century, there appeared to be a growing ideological rift between northern and southern Jews over the issue of race. Northern liberals played a prominent role in the incipient civil rights movement. Among those who answered the famous "Call" of 1909 that led to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were a number of northern Jews. The chairman of its board of directors and the head of its legal committee were the Jewish brothers Joel and Arthur Spingarn. Jewish philanthropists such as Julius Rosenwald also donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the improvement of black health and education.[63]

The civil rights activism of northern Jews drew an adversarial response from their southern coreligionists. In May 1900, the editor of a Jewish newspaper in Alabama condemned northern liberals for misrepresenting the positive race relations he believed prevailed throughout the entire South. With sentiments that would be echoed over and over during the desegregation crisis fifty years later, the paper pointedly encouraged northerners to address the issue of race as it confronted them on their own doorsteps. "If our Northern friends want to learn something about the race question, let them spend some time in their [African Americans'] neighborhood and get some experience with them, and they will soon learn that it is not out of wisdom that they speak."[64]

Over the next several decades, northern liberals intensified their support for the civil rights cause. Accordingly, they became more critical of what they perceived as the pervasive racial prejudice of southern Jews. As the northern rabbi Philip Bernstein observed after a fact-finding mission across the southeastern states in October 1936, "Everywhere we met Jews, the most amazing Jews—Jews so different from those I know in the industrial North. In their languid drawls, their intense southern patriotism, their contempt for 'nigger lovers,' they are . . . obviously a product of their environment." According to an article published in the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* shortly after the Second World War, Jews living below the Mason-Dixon line were often so anxious to establish their southern credentials that they would support seg-

regation with even more vehemence than the native white community. "Most Southern Jews fall in willingly with their non-Jewish neighbors in looking down on the Negro, preventing him from exercising his rights as a citizen, refusing to employ him, and otherwise discriminating against him . . . the Jew as often as not is one step ahead of his non-Jewish neighbor in keeping the Negro from realizing his capabilities."[65]

Yet in reality the situation was more complex than this neat sectional paradigm would suggest. It is too crass a generalization to portray northern Jews as racially progressive and southern Jews as racially reactionary. Those activists who enlisted in such civil rights organizations as the National Urban League and the NAACP cannot, for instance, be said to have represented the racial opinions of all northern Jews. Nor, on the other hand, should all southern Jews be accused of active complicity in the enforcement of Jim Crow. Although many southern Jews did support racial segregation, a conspicuous minority did not. As was the case in the northern states, southern Jews were well represented within the ranks of the developing civil rights movement.

THE RISE OF ANTI-SEMITIC EXTREMISM

Throughout the Jim Crow era, Jews constituted only a fraction of 1 percent of the entire southern population. The influx of thousands of eastern European immigrants into the United States did little to enhance this figure, since few settled in the South.[66] The tiny Jewish population accepted support for racial segregation as the essential precondition for social acceptance among the white Christian majority. As a result, white animosity toward African Americans continued to deflect criticism of Jews. According to the white liberal journalist Jonathan Daniels: "In the Deep South the Jew shares no prejudice with the Negro. Indeed, in most southern towns, except where many Jews have recently come in, the direction of racial prejudice at the Negro frees the Jew from prejudice altogether—or nearly altogether."[67]

Racial prejudice toward African Americans is not the only explanation for the continued social acceptance of southern Jews. Throughout the region, Jews contributed to the economic and civic life of their local communities. As a result, Jews were more readily assimilated into white society than other ethnic minority groups. The status of Jews compares starkly, for instance, with that of the Sicilian immigrants who were employed in southern agriculture. The fact that Sicilians often labored alongside African Americans meant that they were relegated to the same lowly status. In Mississippi and Louisiana, the children of these immigrant workers were deemed unfit to associate with

whites and forced to attend segregated black schools. Efforts by their parents to overturn this ban ended in violent retaliation.[68]

Jews were nonetheless made to feel conscious of their marginal status. Jews have historically served as convenient scapegoats during times of social and economic unrest. As the South was convulsed by a series of societal changes, the latent forces of anti-Semitism reasserted themselves. During the depression of the 1890s, for instance, farmers in Louisiana and Mississippi launched terrorist campaigns against Jewish merchants whom they accused of "every damnable idea conceivable to obtain possession of our lands."[69] The single most important factor in the sharp growth of southern anti-Semitism was the social tension created by the economic transition from the Old to the New South. Strikes at a number of southern textile mills were tinged with anti-Semitic rhetoric.[70]

The most startling manifestation of southern anti-Semitism was the lynching of Leo Frank. On April 29, 1913, Frank, superintendent at a pencil factory in Atlanta, was arrested for the murder of a thirteen-year-old employee, Mary Phagan. The only substantial evidence against Frank was the testimony of a black janitor named Jim Conley, who claimed that he helped carry the body of the dead girl to the coal cellar where it was later found by police. Other evidence that would have cast doubt upon the guilt of the defendant was deliberately withheld by the prosecution. It took the jury only four hours to find Frank guilty. News of the verdict was received rapturously by the crowd of thousands that had gathered outside the courthouse. After an unsuccessful round of appeals that lasted two years, Frank's lawyers petitioned first the prison commission and then the governor for clemency. Satisfied that Frank had been wrongly convicted, Governor John M. Slaton commuted his sentence to life imprisonment with the expectation that he would be exonerated entirely once the furor surrounding the case had subsided. Yet only eight weeks after he had been transferred to the state prison farm at Milledgeville, Frank was kidnapped by a band of men calling themselves the Knights of Mary Phagan. Frank was hanged from an oak tree not far from the Marietta birthplace of his supposed victim.[71]

Frank was effectively condemned before he ever set foot in the courtroom. As Leonard Dinnerstein has forcefully argued, the emergence of the factory system in the South was seen by many as a threat to precious traditions. To rural Georgians drawn to Atlanta in search of employment in the new industries, Mary Phagan's murder became a symbol of all that was corrupt about city life: the crowded living conditions and high crime rate. Texas born, but New York raised, Frank appeared to embody the evils of urbanization, being

at once an industrialist, a northerner, and a Jew. As the pastor asserted at the Baptist church where Mary Phagan had once worshipped, the arrest of "a Jew, and a Yankee Jew at that," rekindled "all of the inborn prejudice" of white southerners and "rose up in a feeling of satisfaction, that here would be a victim worthy to pay for the crime."[72]

The memory of the lynching of Leo Frank ingrained itself on the collective consciousness of southern Jews for over half a century. "People would stay indoors at night," affirmed Atlantan Sol Beton. "They would not venture out into the streets."[73] The lynching served as a stark reminder that their acceptance within the white community, no matter how widespread, was still conditional. As David Goldfield asserts, "Skin color did not give Jewish southerners immunity from the fury of white supremacy."[74] Confronted with this harsh reality, southern Jews were forced into frightened submission. The price for reestablishing their racial identity was an even more passive acceptance of white supremacy. As Solomon Hoffman of Statesville, North Carolina, observed, "A member of a minority group must be a little better to be regarded as 'as good as' and this I think is a good discipline."[75]

Following the Leo Frank lynching, southern Jews were constantly reminded of their ambiguous social status. The Ku Klux Klan was reestablished in October 1915. As John Higham observes, the southern Klan "was considerably less anti-Semitic than in the North."[76] Although Jews were only a secondary target of the Klan, they still suffered persecution. Jewish merchants across the South experienced Klan attacks.[77] Southern Jews nonetheless succeeded in containing the Klan by deliberately blurring the distinction between themselves and other whites. Conscious that their ethnic identity placed them under constant suspicion, they strove to behave in a manner becoming of white southerners. A graphic illustration of this is the Klan stronghold of Birmingham, Alabama. Representatives from the Klan and the Jewish community stood alongside one another in the local wing of the American Legion, which organized a series of public sporting events in the city every year. As local Jewish lawyer Karl Friedman recalls: "There was open communication between the representatives of the Klan and the Jewish Community, primarily through Mr. Joe Denaburg who owned a downtown pawn shop and jewelry business, and who knew many members of the Klan. If there was a Jewish problem, they would consult with Joe, or if there was something that concerned Jewish people, he would consult with them." Denaburg even supplied Klansmen with pistols and sheets.[78]

Although southern Jews were able to establish some form of accommoda-

tion with the Klan, they could not contain the emergence of a number of fringe organizations that were dedicated to the cause of anti-Semitism. Upon news in February 1915 of President Woodrow Wilson's nomination of the liberal Jewish lawyer Louis D. Brandeis as an associate justice of the Supreme Court, a group calling itself the "Southern Gentile Democrats" quickly dispatched a telegram to the office of the Senate's Judiciary Committee, calling the nomination "a disgrace and a shame."[79]

Yet it was not only those extremists operating on the fringe of southern society whom Jews had to fear. After the First World War, the American public retreated into isolationism, at once suspicious of further entanglements in international affairs and fearful of foreign immigrants who threatened their traditional way of life. This manifested itself in institutional terms through the introduction of restrictive quotas by universities and exclusion from social clubs and holiday resort hotels. In New Orleans, Jews were similarly excluded from Mardi Gras.[80]

The Second World War witnessed an alarming increase in American anti-Semitism. Northern cities were most seriously infected with the malignant growth of Fascism. Nazi propagandists established their operations in New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.[81] Yet the South did not entirely escape the encroaching influence of anti-Semitic extremism. The Rev. L. M. Birkhead, a spokesperson for the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, had asserted as far back as 1936 that militant anti-Semites were secluded along the southeastern seaboard, where they lay armed and waiting to attack. William Dudley Pelley established the headquarters of his anti-Semitic Christian Party in Asheville, North Carolina. Robert Reynolds of Buncombe County was another anti-Semite active in North Carolina. Mississippi congressman John Rankin argued for the establishment of "an organization of white Gentile Americans" to combat those "long-nosed reprobates" in the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish defense agencies, whom, he alleged, were out to destroy the existing social order.[82]

Given their precarious status within the white community, it is no surprise that southern Jews should have publicly supported racial segregation. Some Jews were, of course, more thoroughly acculturated than others. Those whose families had settled in the region during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were more inclined to accept the subordinate status of African Americans as their natural condition. Hence the strident endorsement that the *Jewish Sentiment* gave in June 1896 to the lynching of two African Americans in Columbus, Georgia: "We congratulate the people of Columbus, and the

State, upon being forever rid of two such scoundrels as those negroes who were hung." Karl Friedman similarly recalls how his family celebrated his bar mitzvah in 1937 by inviting guests "to view a Saturday night lynching in downtown Birmingham." The blatant racism of many southern Jews was also affirmed by the New York journalist B. Charney Vladeck. Vladeck was a witness to the race riot that erupted in Norfolk, Virginia, on July 4, 1910. What he saw reminded him of the pogroms in czarist Russia. Yet when he sought to convince local Jews to intervene in support of another brutally repressed minority, he was rebuffed with the words that African Americans were "nothing but animals."[83]

Those eastern European immigrants who did settle in the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were less willing to accept white supremacy. These émigrés had not only experienced persecution in their native homelands but continued to occupy a marginal status in southern society.[84] As such they empathized much more strongly with the plight of African Americans. One case in point is the reaction of Russian Jews to the Atlanta riot of September 1906. As he walked through the city, Russian immigrant David Yampolsky Davis was reminded of the violent repression of his own people. Indeed, he later described the riot as the "Pogrom in Atlanta in 1906." Russian Jews had established a strong reputation among African Americans for their willingness to trade on more amenable terms than other whites. During the riot, these merchants provided another invaluable service. According to the black schoolteacher E. T. Lewis, "If you went to a store in a section where it was all white, then you were liable to get attacked." Asked why storeowners in the black section of the city survived the riot largely unscathed, Lewis explained that this was "mostly because they were Jews. . . . We felt that they were on our side."[85]

Without the necessary political strength, those southern Jews who opposed segregation were nonetheless powerless to register any sort of protest. The status of Jews as members of the ruling caste was entirely dependent upon their continued support for racial segregation. Such was the precariousness of their position that they dared not risk breaking ranks with the white segregationist majority. It was only when an increasing number of white Gentiles began to organize in support of black civil rights that Jews felt sufficiently confident to speak out.

After the First World War, there emerged a small but dedicated band of southern liberals, committed to improving the condition of African Americans in the region. Reformers, rather than revolutionaries, they did not so much at-

tack segregation as seek to give real meaning to the otherwise empty rhetoric of "separate but equal." A notable percentage of Jews allied themselves to the liberal cause. Among the subscribers, for example, who had helped raise $270 by December 1913 for the newly established Savannah Urban League were a number of Jews: F. M. Cohen, Merritt W. Cohen, Mrs. M. M. Cohen, and D. Feldman. Jewish liberals were influential in the establishment of the New Orleans Urban League.[86] They also added their voices to the growing outcry against lynching. An antilynching campaign led during the 1920s by Sidney Herold, a lawyer from Shreveport, Louisiana, so incensed the Klan that he had to hire bodyguards to protect himself from a hired killer. Norfolk newspaperman Louis Isaac Jaffe was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1929 for a series of antilynching editorials.[87]

The most significant contribution to the emerging civil rights movement was provided by southern rabbis. Not all southern rabbis could be considered racially enlightened. The spiritual leader of one Georgia congregation insisted that segregation should be maintained for no other reason than the unbearable smell whites would have to endure through closer contact with blacks. When walking down the street, alleged the rabbi, "If a Negro has been that way before I can tell it."[88] The experiences of many rabbis nonetheless anticipated the internal convulsions suffered by the Jewish community during the later desegregation crisis. As a result of their outspoken criticisms against white racism, the rabbis publicly identified all Jews with the liberal cause. Their individual acts of bravery were denounced as foolhardiness by a Jewish community fearful of antagonizing the white Gentile majority. These tensions anticipated the bitter struggle that arose between religious leaders and laypeople in response to the Supreme Court decision of 1954.

The Scottsboro case provides the clearest illustration of the challenges that would face not only rabbis but all southern Jews in the postwar era. The case concerned nine black youths falsely accused of raping two white girls aboard the Chattanooga to Memphis freight train in March 1931. When the International Labor Defense of the Communist Party took up the boys' appeal, it appointed New York lawyer Samuel Leibowitz as their lawyer. Leibowitz's arrival in Alabama sparked a number of anti-Semitic outbursts from the southern press. Anxious to avert any accusations of Communist sympathies being leveled against themselves, many southern Jews chose to keep as low a profile as possible during the affair. As at least one rabbi who did decide to intervene discovered, the racism of many southern Jews also negated any sympathies for the Scottsboro boys.[89]

Rabbi Joseph H. Gumbiner was the spiritual leader of a small-town congregation in Alabama at the time of the Scottsboro trial. Appalled by what he considered a complete miscarriage of justice, Gumbiner felt compelled to speak out against the boys' conviction. His congregation was furious. According to Gumbiner, even "the best and most liberal" of the temple's members exerted intense pressure on him "to remain silent about the issue in the pulpit." When the rabbi chose to ignore these protests and proceed as planned with a special sermon, an emergency board meeting was called, at which the temple's president demanded to know of Gumbiner: "Where does Judaism mix in with race relations? Tell us about Abraham, Isaac, and Rebecca. Stick to Judaism."[90]

Rabbi Gumbiner managed to get off lightly. Rabbi Benjamin Goldstein-Lowell was at that time spiritual leader of Temple Beth Or in Montgomery. Goldstein-Lowell well knew what it was like to be part of the social underclass; as a young boy his parents had been so poor that he had to walk to school barefooted. On March 26, 1933, the rabbi traveled to Birmingham to attend a rally in support of the Scottsboro boys. When he returned to Montgomery, the board of trustees presented him with a stark choice: shut up or pack up. Unwilling to abandon his principles, he resigned.[91]

By the outbreak of the Second World War, most southern Jews were strongly compliant with the caste system. At the turn of the century, the Jewish newspaper editor Herbert Ezekiel had argued, "There is nothing in common between the races in this section."[92] Nothing much had occurred in the intervening years to change that perception. As members of the dominant white race, Jews had little reason to identify with African Americans. The only blacks with whom they had any intimate point of contact were the customers who patronized their stores and the domestic servants whom they employed in their homes. Today, many southern Jews who look back on that era do so with misgivings about their acceptance of racial segregation. "I've asked myself often," confesses Bea Gotthelf of Jackson, Mississippi, "why, when we were growing up, we didn't see all of this." It took the Supreme Court decision of 1954 to really open her eyes. Not, Gotthelf continues, "until it's brought to the fore, and you really see what persecution has been to the blacks . . . you don't realize the pain of those people, and they always seemed so happy. Well, they had to seem happy because . . . that was the way of life here."[93]

2 BLACK PERCEPTIONS OF JEWS

Shortly before 6 A.M. on December 20, 1956, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. boarded a bus in downtown Montgomery, Alabama, chose a seat toward the front, and sat back to enjoy the journey. After more than twelve months, the Montgomery bus boycott was over. The triumph over segregation on the city's buses served as the blueprint for future campaigns of nonviolent direct action against Jim Crow laws across the South. It also promoted King, the twenty-seven-year-old head of the Montgomery Improvement Association, to the pivotal role of figurehead for the national civil rights movement. In the words of *Jet* magazine, the world had just witnessed the arrival of "Alabama's Modern Moses," the man who would lead his people from the inequities and oppression of the southern caste system to a Promised Land of racial equality.[1]

All of this seemed rather ironic given the refusal of Montgomery's own Jewish community to support the boycott. Anxious to enlist the influential support of white liberals, the boycotters had turned instinctively to local Jews. They were wrong in assuming, however, that the Jewish people would naturally embrace the civil rights struggle. In the midst of the campaign, King confessed, "Montgomery Jews want to bury their heads and repeat that it is not a Jewish problem. I want to go on record, and agree that it is not a Jewish problem, but it is a fight between the forces of justice and injustice. I want them to join with us on the side of justice." It was not to be. During the 381 days of the boycott, the local Jewish community actively avoided any association with the Montgomery Improvement Association.[2]

Years later, as he assessed the astonishing civil rights victories of the 1960s, King enthusiastically acknowledged the contribution of Jewish activists. Some had suffered arrest and abuse, such as the sixteen rabbis who joined his campaign in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1964. Others, most notably Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, murdered by Mississippi police officers,

had made the ultimate sacrifice. "It would be impossible to record the contribution that the Jewish people have made toward the Negro's struggle for freedom," asserted King, "it has been so great."[3]

Those Jewish activists who had braved the vicious assaults of white segregationists were almost overwhelmingly from the northern states. Such was the importance of their contribution to the civil rights cause as to cast a shadow of suspicion on those Jews who refrained from any active involvement. This was especially true of the small minority of Jews who actually lived in the South and were acutely aware of the racial injustice throughout the region. King continued to express his disappointment with southern Jews throughout the campaigns of the 1960s. As he wrote in September 1967 to friend and fellow activist Rabbi Jacob Rothschild: "I think we all have to admit that there are Jews in the South who have not been anything like our allies in the civil rights struggle and have gone out of the way to consort with the perpetrators of the status quo. I saw this in both Montgomery, Alabama, and Albany, Georgia. And I must confess that I, too, was greatly disappointed because we always expect our Jewish brothers to be our strongest allies if for no other reason than the fact that they have had a common oppression."[4]

King was not alone in holding high expectations about the role Jews should perform in the civil rights movement. Unprecedented as the scale of their suffering had been during the Holocaust, Jews had experienced enormous persecution throughout history. Endless encounters with anti-Semitism across the globe had instilled Jews with an extreme sensitivity toward discrimination. Hence the presupposition of so many civil rights leaders that Jews instinctively empathized with their struggle against segregation. "We were hoping that they would at least share or support the blacks," observes Charles Phillips, a former member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Forrest County, Mississippi. "Jews, in many instances, were also pushed aside." Ozell Sutton, associate director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations during the late 1960s, recalls attending a civil rights symposium at which Little Rock rabbi Elijah Palnick spoke of his willingness to march alongside civil rights demonstrators. "I want to remind Brother Palnick," Sutton suddenly intervened, "that according to what I know about his religion, he has the responsibility to walk and to fight the good fight, whether anybody else does it or not. I said, not only must he walk with . . . the white community, he must walk if they do not walk."[5]

African Americans were not oblivious to the political difficulties confronting southern Jews. As Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, as-

serted: "Some have joined the Negro's opposition for safety's sake—and perhaps understandably so. What can a lone Jew, or a dozen Jews, do in a small Southern town against overwhelming white supremacy sentiment?"[6] Despite their awareness of the political constraints suffered by southern Jews, especially their lack of numbers and their vulnerability to anti-Semitism, African Americans were nonetheless unable to disguise their anger and resentment. Since the Second World War they had come to assume that Jews would stand strong in the struggle against segregation. The failure of southern Jews to support the integrationist cause therefore left many African Americans with a profound sense of betrayal. As Aaron Henry, president of the NAACP in Clarksdale, Mississippi, admitted: "In the fight for human dignity, we have never underestimated our opposition, but we have overestimated our support. We thought that naturally we would have the Jews on our side, because the enemies of the Jews were usually found in the same group that opposes us. But we don't have the Jews supporting us." The failure of southern Jews to support the civil rights movement branded them as traitors, not only to African Americans but to their own heritage. Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, president of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, was adamant that the experience of persecution down the centuries compelled Jews to intervene. "From its deep historical past, so rich and so titanic in its contribution to history and civilization, the Jews should know what persecution means. Why do you not speak up?"[7]

How did African Americans come to hold such high expectations of Jews? This chapter explores the evolution of black attitudes toward Jews in the American South, from the antebellum era to the eve of the civil rights struggle. Throughout these years, race and class served as insurmountable barriers to personal friendships or political alliances between African Americans and Jews. The influence of white fundamentalist Protestantism also encouraged African Americans to regard Jews with a certain mistrust and suspicion. Yet despite these restrictive forces, African Americans had by the Second World War developed a certain sense of kinship with Jews, coming to regard them as potential allies in the struggle against Jim Crow.

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

"Almost nothing is known about southern black attitudes toward Jews," affirms historian Stephen Whitfield, "and even in recent times polling data is ambiguous."[8] This observation is especially true of the ante-

bellum era. Outside such cities as New Orleans and Charleston, the thinly distributed Jewish population struggled to sustain a communal existence. As a result, there was little or no meaningful interaction between African Americans and Jews.

What we do know is that African American attitudes toward Jews were shaped by their conversion to the fundamentalist Christianity of their white masters. The impact of these teachings was to instill in the minds of African Americans a complex and contradictory attitude toward Jews that would persist well into the twentieth century.

Slaves were converted to the faith of their masters by itinerant white preachers who brought the word of God to the plantation. From the lips of these preachers, the slaves learned that the Jews had rejected the teachings of their Lord and had him killed. The acceptance of such pernicious stereotypes can clearly be seen in a number of slave spirituals, one of which contains the lines "Virgin Mary had one son / The cruel Jews had him hung." Although most slaves never set eyes on a single Jew, they nonetheless held deeply ingrained ideas about Jewish depravity. A popular black ballad of the nineteenth century echoes this theme in its depiction of the crucifixion: "Dey nail him to de cross . . . / Dey river His feet . . . / Dey hang him high . . . / An' dey stretch Him wide . . . / O de cruel Jews dem took ma Jesus."[9]

The teachings of the white preacher instilled in the slaves a strong sense of fear and suspicion of Jews. One female slave who suddenly disappeared on the day she was to be transferred to a new mistress was asked upon being captured to explain herself. To this, the terrified woman replied, "They tell me Miss Isaacs is a Jew, an' if the Jews kill the Lord and Master, what won't they do to a poor little nigger like me!" Rachel Mordecai Lazarus of Wilmington, North Carolina, similarly wrote of a hired servant who was so distrustful of her new mistress that she tried to secure a different employer. "Saint Sophia," as Lazarus sarcastically referred to her, had sought out a "*truly pious* woman" to whom she "declared that the great difference in *our religions* made it impossible for her to be contented with me!"[10]

It is, however, an overstatement to suggest, as does Leonard Dinnerstein, that the antebellum era was a time of "black venom and distrust of Jews." There was also a more positive side to the way Jews were perceived within African American religion. Once again it is important to assess the influence of white Christian fundamentalism. As we have already seen, although southern whites condemned Jews for the crimes they had allegedly committed, their emphasis on the teachings of the Old Testament also led them to believe

that these same Christ killers were God's chosen people. When African Americans were converted to Christianity, they in turn inherited this complex conception of Jews.

Slaves drew comfort and inspiration from hearing how Moses had delivered his people from their enslavement in ancient Egypt. Just as the Old Testament Hebrews had struggled free of their suffering, so the slaves believed their redemption would one day be at hand, be it in this life or the next. "Man learns right smart from Exodus 'bout how to lead," declared George Briggs, an elderly black preacher. "Moses still de strongest impression dat we have as rulers." The parallels slaves saw between themselves and the ancient Israelites were reinforced by the spirituals they sang, from "Go Down, Moses, Let My People Go" and "Daniel in the Lion's Den," to "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho." As the historian Lawrence Levine has argued, the lyrics to such spirituals assumed an air of symbolic protest against slavery, defiantly proclaiming that African Americans would one day be free.[11]

The story of Moses has continued to resonate in the faith and folklore of African Americans. One of the most obvious examples is the legend surrounding Harriet Tubman, the former slave who helped liberate three hundred of her fellow bondsmen and women. Such heroic endeavors earned Tubman a reputation as the "Moses of Her People" who had freed the slaves from the Pharaoh of the South. Black educator Booker T. Washington recalled how he, like his fellow bondsmen, had often hoped that he too would soon be setting out on the road to salvation, a road which had been paved for him centuries earlier by the Hebrew race. Of the Bible, he asserted that "to my childish mind the most fascinating portion of that book was the story of the manner in which Moses led the children of Israel out of the house of bondage, through the wilderness, into the promised land. I first heard that story from the lips of my mother, when both she and I were slaves on a plantation in Virginia."[12]

"THEY WERE ALL WHITE FOLKS"

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the majority of African Americans in the South had little or no contact with Jews. While most African Americans continued to reside in rural areas, the Jewish population was predominantly urban. Even in the cities, sharp divisions were drawn by racial segregation, religious beliefs, and occupational status. Unless they shopped at their stores or served as their employees, blacks seldom asso-

ciated with Jews. Their perception of Jews was informed less by personal experience than by popular stereotypes, both positive and negative. At a leadership level it is nonetheless possible to see signs of a growing understanding among African Americans that they shared a common status with Jews as a persecuted minority group. By the eve of the Second World War, an increasing number of black leaders believed that Jews should share a greater sensitivity and even solidarity with African Americans. Civil rights activist John Lewis asserts that he developed a strong affinity with Jews while growing up in his native town of Troy, Georgia. "As long as I could remember, I heard many white people in the South pronounce the word 'Jew' in the same way they used the term 'nigger.'" This sense of kinship was compounded by the stories about the Old Testament Israelites that he learned in Sunday school. "I could see that their struggle was very similar to ours."[13]

It is true that to most southern blacks, Jews were indisputably part of the white populace. Nonetheless, there remained a nagging sense that they were somehow a breed apart. Much of this owed to the continuing impact of the Old Testament and the tales of the ancient Israelites. The iniquities endured by African Americans under the Jim Crow caste system served as proof that, despite their emancipation from slavery, they had not yet been delivered to the Promised Land. The example of Moses and his people still therefore served as a source of inspiration to many. As Horace Mann Bond explained, "What with prayers before each meal, and scripture reading morning and night, and three church services on Sunday, and daily Chapel at school, one did hear a great deal about the People of Israel."[14]

Not that the old ambivalence toward Jews had been entirely eroded. Shortly before setting out on a field trip to Indianola, Mississippi, in September 1932, social anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker received the counsel of black sociologists Charles S. Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier, both of whom "strongly advised me not to reveal my Jewish background to Negroes or whites in a Bible Belt community." Blacks and whites alike, they explained, still deemed Jews to be "Christ killers." Heeding their words of warning, Powdermaker passed herself off as a Methodist throughout her stay in the South. As a child in Vicksburg, Mississippi, Rabbi Albert Friedlander could expect that "I'd quite often be chased away" when he posted handbills for a local drug store through the doors of the town's black folk. This he attributes to the "fundamentalistic" convictions of African Americans who "were still of the opinion that Jews were Christ killers."[15]

The day-to-day relationship between African Americans and Jews was in-

deed fraught with ambiguity. On the positive side, African Americans frequently asserted that Jews were more compassionate in their racial attitudes than other whites. Jewish storeowners, for instance, earned a strong reputation for their attentive treatment of black customers. In stark contrast to the typical white retailer, Jewish merchants willingly extended credit to African Americans, allowed them to sample goods, and addressed them as "Mr." and "Mrs." As Aaron Henry recalled of the Jewish merchants in his childhood home of Clarksdale, Mississippi, "You would consider them the better of the white element that you had dealings with."[16]

Jewish employers were similarly praised for the higher wages and more amenable working hours they provided African Americans. Black Atlantan Walter Kimbrough, for instance, recalls that his mother was "exceptionally well" treated by the Jewish family for whom she worked. To this day, Max Rovkrens and his wife enjoy "a meaningful relationship" with the woman who raised their three sons. J. E. Malone of Mobile, Alabama, also believed that Jews were considerably more compassionate than other whites in their behavior toward blacks. Writing to the *Crisis* in March 1936, Malone claimed that, having lived for sixteen years in the South, and in eight states, Jews throughout the region were consistent in taking a kindlier consideration of African Americans: "The doors of the Synagogue in my city are always open to the Negro and without fear of contradiction I can truthfully say that here in the Southland where thousands of Negro women are working for $1.50 per week, others for $2.50 and $3, it is the Jew who pays as much as $5 and over for domestic servants." Dorothy Bolden would have heartily endorsed this assessment. A native of Atlanta, from her early childhood in the 1920s she worked as a domestic servant for many white families. Of most of her employers, she scowled that they had "no feeling for you." Those Jews for whom Mrs. Bolden worked, by contrast, "always loved me" and offered her small presents. More important, they gave her a sense of dignity denied by other employers.[17]

On the negative side, African Americans continued to encounter certain Jews who confirmed rather than confounded their prejudices. Such was the desire of many southern Jews to integrate into white society that they soon abandoned whatever innate sympathies they might share for the Negro. As Dr. George A. Owens, onetime president of Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi, succinctly summarized it: "They were all white folks. I didn't know the difference."[18]

Experience taught other African Americans to disabuse themselves of any ideas that Jews were different from other whites. While working for an optical

company in Memphis, the novelist Richard Wright sought to enlist the services of a sympathetic white employee who would procure books for him from the local library. Running through a list of possible accomplices, Wright noted, "There was Don, a Jew; but I distrusted him. His position was not much better than mine and I knew that he was uneasy and insecure; he had always treated me in an offhand, bantering way that barely concealed his contempt. I was afraid to ask him to help me get books; his frantic desire to demonstrate a racial solidarity with the whites against Negroes might make him betray me."[19]

Many African American leaders were thus persuaded that it would be futile to try to enlist the support of southern Jews. The position of the Jew was an impossible one. In a September 1938 article, the *Atlanta Daily World* sensitively depicted the Jew as being torn between the need to have the courage of his convictions and his desire to protect his personal and economic security. Jewish merchants, the paper proclaimed, were often guilty of economically exploiting African Americans. Nonetheless, "It must be remembered that Jews are influenced in their attitude toward Negroes by the mores of the dominant group, which is the white American group. Jews might be sympathetic, but being classed as white, they dare not show too much friendliness for fear of losing caste on their own account." These sentiments were echoed by NAACP executive secretary James Weldon Johnson. After one particular journey to Atlanta, he observed: "The diplomacy of the Jew was something to be admired. . . . He knew that to sanction Negro oppression would be to sanction Jewish oppression. . . . Long traditions and business instincts told him when in Rome to act as a Roman. Altogether his position was a delicate one, and I gave him credit for the skill he displayed in maintaining it."[20]

Yet despite all this, no matter what their preachers or personal experience might tell them, African Americans continued to perceive the Jew in a positive light. Particularly with regard to other immigrant groups, their position remained an altogether elevated one. An entrenched enmity toward immigrants existed among many African Americans in the South. Their fear, particularly during the 1920s, was that the migration of African Americans to the North had gathered such momentum that whites were now anxiously seeking to entice foreigners into filling the holes in the southern workforce. Jobs that African Americans had supposed were securely theirs would then be threatened, a prospect which left them feeling both impotent and insecure.

Frantic to thwart such an eventuality, African American leaders conspired to convince white employers that they were about to make a terrible mistake,

replacing an honest and hardworking black workforce, which had toiled alongside whites in developing the southern economy over the past three centuries, with lazy and disloyal foreigners. It was therefore in employers' best interest to improve the economic conditions that caused the northern migration of African Americans. "The South," maintained the *Norfolk Journal and Guide,* "has the best labor force in the world, for the South, in its Negro workers, and it should learn how to keep it." If the South failed to do this, it would be overwhelmed by "socialistic" and "anarchistic" foreigners, who would breed unrest among their fellow laborers, organize labor uprisings, and blight the region's business interests.[21]

Of all the various immigrant groups, Jews alone escaped such criticism. As a number of historians have noted, Jews were different from the Irish or Italians because they did not compete directly for the same jobs as African Americans. Jews had little involvement in agriculture. Those who did reside in rural areas tended to establish themselves as merchants, not field hands.

There was, however, a more positive aspect to African Americans' appreciation of the Jew. Many black leaders adopted an idealized conception of Jewish communal pride. Both groups had suffered a lowly status on first arriving in America, but only Jews had succeeded in shaking off the shackles of destitution and discrimination. This was enough to convince leading African Americans that Jews must possess certain innate qualities, qualities which their own people must learn to acquire if they were ever to make a similar success of themselves. "The Jew is known the world over as a good and law abiding citizen," asserted Benjamin Davis, editor of the *Atlanta Independent.* "The *Independent* holds them up to all other citizens as a model. . . . It is so rare for a Jew to commit a crime and be brought into the courts for heinous ones, that when he does commit one, every reasonable doubt is in his favor. The *Independent* regrets that this is not true of the Negro folks. We are all too prone to commit crimes."[22]

Reflecting in 1899 upon his recent excursion across Europe, Booker T. Washington exclaimed how impressed he had been by the way the Jewish people had not only struggled against often overwhelming odds but succeeded in establishing a prosperous position for themselves in society. If African Americans were ever to flourish, he affirmed, then "The Future of the American Negro" rested on their following such an example. "Unless the Negro learns more and more to imitate the Jew in these matters, to have faith in himself, he cannot expect to have any high degree of success." We should treat Washington's words with a certain degree of skepticism. Tuskegee Insti-

tute relied on the donations of northern Jewish benefactors. Although privately Washington harbored serious prejudices against Jews, publicly he was compelled to express his admiration. Were Washington the only African American leader to extol the virtues of Jews, it would be easy to dismiss his observations as cynical rhetoric. However, he was not. In a review of Jacob R. Marcus's book *The Jew in the Medieval World,* pioneering black educator Carter G. Woodson concluded that it was the solidarity among Jews, so lacking in African Americans, that had enabled them to survive in the face of unrelenting discrimination. "The Jew," he affirmed, "readily takes to racial organization, but the Negro easily becomes entangled in the tentacles of organizations established to strengthen his foes. The Jew knows and feels that he is the world's greatest intellectual, the Negro finds it difficult to shuffle off his inferiority complex."[23]

Nothing more ably demonstrated the ability of Jews to organize themselves against their oppressors than the establishment of national defense agencies such as the Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Committee. Too long had African Americans passively accepted their position as second-class citizens. The need to follow the lead set by Jews was long overdue. According to the *Savannah Tribune,* "Such a movement on the part of Jews is indeed far reaching and important at this time. To know that there exists a people who have the courage to stand up for their own and insist upon a square deal being given them is indeed encouraging and inspiring to us as a people."[24]

Of the thousands who thrilled one sultry night in June 1938 to the sight of world heavyweight hope Joe Louis fight Max Schmeling, few, if any, were Jewish. The Jewish defense agencies had encouraged Jews to boycott the fight in protest against Schmeling, who was closely identified with the Nazi government in Germany. The blow struck by Jews in the defense of human rights was as nothing compared to the pounding Louis received from his German opponent, being knocked out in the twelfth round. To the *Richmond Planet,* this was nonetheless an important illustration of the way in which Jews rallied against their oppressors: "Unlike the American Negro, Jews do not believe in licking the hand that smites them nor in feeding the mouths of those who seek to crush them body and soul."[25]

IN SEARCH OF BROTHERHOOD

Not only did the Jewish community appear to have accomplished more than African Americans, but it had done so in the face of equally persistent prejudice. The black press occasionally included stories which sug-

gested that Jews were as much the victims of the white majority as its own people. The *Norfolk Journal and Guide* informed its readers that, throughout the South, Jews had to contend with employment agencies that refused to hire them, hotels that denied them admission, and colleges that imposed restrictive quotas on their entrance numbers. "In many of our Southern States," the paper alleged, "the Jews are considered undesirable citizens, mainly because of their racial clannishness and their ability to overreach every other kind of trader."[26]

To some African Americans it therefore seemed that there was a common bond of oppression that linked them to the Jewish community. In the early twentieth century, however, this bond still seemed rather loose. Few black leaders were willing to suggest that southern Jews struggled on the same margins of society as did their own people. Jews were still fundamentally part of the larger white community. Despite the occasional anti-Semitic outbreak, their social condition was essentially stable. Since they lacked any real mutual interests with African Americans, they were therefore unlikely to extend much support in the struggle against segregation.

Nothing more amply illustrates this than the reaction of the black press to the lynching of Leo Frank. If a Jew could suffer at the same hands as did African Americans, then might there not be some shared interest between both peoples in organizing against their oppressors? This was not a question that the majority of African Americans appear even to have asked. In an editorial of March 1914, the *Atlanta Independent* did contend that Frank had been condemned not because he had committed any crime but "because he was a Jew." Blacks too had been lynched simply because of the color of their skin. The implication therefore was that anti-Semitism and racism were but two manifestations of the general racial intolerance of white southerners. This, however, seems to have escaped the *Independent*. Although the paper urgently requested a retrial, it made no further allusion to Frank's ethnic identity. The condemned man was simply "entitled to a fair and impartial trial by a jury of his peers at a time when public sentiment is normal." Other newspapers failed entirely to address the fact that Frank was Jewish. Reflective arguably of the extent to which Jews were assimilated into the dominant Gentile culture, they simply referred to the defendant as "a white man."[27]

That Frank had met his fate through the injustice of the mob in a manner chillingly reminiscent of so many African Americans was not an issue that concerned the black press. The lack of empathy African Americans felt toward Jews was starkly illustrated by the *Savannah Tribune*. Although the paper deplored Frank's lynching, it was in no doubt as to his guilt. Of ex-Governor

Slaton's efforts to justify his commuting Frank's sentence, the *Tribune* asserted: "Mr. Slaton will have a hard time convincing the people of Georgia as to the innocence of Frank." In branding blacks as murderous miscreants, white southerners had shielded themselves behind a veil of respectability. That veil had been ripped away with the revelation that Frank, "a white man," had committed the most unspeakable crime known to southerners. An allegation in the *New York World* that a black convict had attempted to cut Frank's throat while he was in prison was also criticized as an attempt to implicate African Americans in a sordid affair that was the work of whites alone. "The Negro," attested the *Tribune*, "has too much to bear already, do not credit him with this crime."[28]

If anything, the affair only served to aggravate tensions between African Americans and Jews. Aside from the *Atlanta Independent*, the black press appears to have accepted Jim Conley's testimony. By contrast, both Frank and his lawyers sought to establish his innocence by characterizing Conley as the embodiment of everything that was evil about black men. Defense attorney Luther Rosser castigated the prosecution for presenting Conley as a reliable witness, having him washed, shaved, and smartly dressed in order to conceal the fact that he was, in truth, "a dirty, filthy, black, drunken, lying nigger." Clarence Feibelman's conviction that Frank was innocent similarly led him to describe the janitor as an "illiterate, drunken black man." Asked to assess how this polarity of opinion about Conley might have affected relations between Jews and African Americans, Feibelman candidly admitted, "I certainly don't think that it would've improved it any."[29]

The most alarming anti-Semitic incident in the entire history of the South therefore had little impact upon African Americans' perception of Jews. Nonetheless, the possibility of a potential alliance between the two peoples did begin to take shape during these years. It was events outside not only the South but the United States itself that would determine this.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Ultimately it was not the condition of Jews in their own country but the fate of those in foreign lands that most fired the African American imagination. During the 1880s, black press writers and political leaders began to juxtapose the persecution of Jews in czarist Russia with the racial prejudice of the American South. Sympathetic as they were to events in Europe, their intention was equally to demonstrate in the most dramatic terms the difficul-

ties suffered by their own people. At this time there was little notion that circumstances should unite blacks and Jews in anything more than an abstract kinship. The rise of Fascism transformed the thinking of many African Americans. More starkly than ever before, there emerged the sense of a symbiotic relationship between the two peoples, one that would influence African Americans in the eventual organization of the modern civil rights movement.

Under the auspices of Nicholas II, the Russian government in the late nineteenth century unleashed a savage assault against the country's Jewish population. Anxious to undermine all threats of revolution, the state accused Jews of having caused the country's economic woes. A series of repressive measures, including the May Laws of 1882 and culminating in a wave of anti-Semitic violence, forced thousands of Jews to flee Russia.[30]

The African American press offered sustained and sympathetic coverage of these events. Readers of the *Huntsville Gazette* were informed regularly of the adversities suffered by Russia's beleaguered Jews and of the diplomatic efforts being made on their behalf. Ordinarily, the paper was less than praiseworthy in its assessment of immigrants, the majority of whom were alleged to have a "low moral and intellectual level." Not so those Jews who sought asylum from Russia. The *Gazette* criticized Austria, Italy, and Germany for seeking to restrict the resettlement of Jewish refugees within their borders. Praise was showered upon the Prussian aristocrat Baron Hirsch, whose financial assistance enabled hundreds of Russian Jews to emigrate to the United States. So wretched in appearance were these new arrivals, opined the *Gazette,* that the port authorities preferred to reject their applications for refugee status. It was the expressed hope of the paper that "Baron Hirsch's donation will induce the United States not to send back to Europe the many thousands of Russian Jews who are preparing to swarm across the Atlantic."[31]

Sympathetic as they were to the suffering of Russian Jews, African American leaders argued adamantly that the prejudice against their own people was even more pronounced. Only one voice argued differently, and that belonged to Booker T. Washington. Addressing an audience in Little Rock, Arkansas, in November 1905, Washington asserted, "In Russia, there are one-half as many Jews as there are Negroes in this country, and yet I feel sure that within a month more Jews have been persecuted and killed than the whole number of our people who have been lynched during the past forty years, but this, of course, is no excuse for lynching."[32]

In emphasizing the sheer scale of the onslaught in Russia, Washington had sought to place the suffering of his own people in what he thought its proper

perspective. Other black leaders also expressed their sympathies for the victims of czarist oppression. Unlike Washington, however, they suggested that there was a stark parallel between the plight of Russian Jews and that of African Americans. In effect they were using reportage of conditions in Russia to publicize problems at home. A clear example of this is a letter by white liberal John D. Swain, which the editors of *The Voice of the Negro* included in their September 1906 edition. According to Swain, when African Americans read of the way in which Russian Jews were forced to surrender their traveling rights and live in ghettos, they could not help but be reminded of their own degraded status. "In our 'Jim Crow' legislation," he contended, "and our customs as to admittance of Negroes to places of public entertainment, theaters, hotels, etc., we are treading the same old worn path along which the Jew has passed for centuries." The editors of the *Nashville Globe* shared a similar agenda with their counterparts at the *Voice of the Negro.* In an editorial of 1907 on the "Persecution of the Jews," the paper pointedly reminded readers that history had taught "that where two races living in the same country and one allowed to deprecate upon the rights of the other with impunity, the dominant one has always grown bold, arrogant, tyrannical and criminal toward the other. . . . What is true of the treatment of the Jews in Russia is hardly less true of the treatment of the Negro race in America."[33]

The response of white political leaders to the Russian situation complicated the response of the black press. Those same white Americans who expressed their outrage at the pogroms in Russia often acquiesced in the repressive treatment of black people on their own shores. Such complacency so angered the black press that the tone of its coverage began to change. Sympathy for Russian Jews soured into irritation at white America. Following the Bialystok pogrom of August 1905, which left some sixty Jews dead, the Senate issued a resolution expressing the sympathy and outrage of the American people. This caused nothing but bitterness among blacks. In a scathing attack on white America published in the *Voice of the Negro,* J. W. E. Bowen and J. Max Barber demanded to know, "What right has the United States to be horrified? . . . We are having here in America Kishinevs and Bialystoks every day." The hypocrisy of most Americans was also highlighted by the *Atlanta Independent.* An editorial of December 1910, entitled "Charity Begins at Home," reported on how the North Georgia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at a session held in Athens, had adopted a resolution condemning the situation in Russia but had remained silent on the issue of racism back home. "We are not asking our neighbours not to sympathize with Russia," insisted

the *Independent,* "not to pray for the relief of the oppressed Jews, but to wash their hands clean with duty at home before they go ten thousand miles away to demonstrate their charity."[34]

The increasing resentment of African Americans reflects an important truth about their attitudes toward the Jews in czarist Russia. Their concern was to exploit events abroad in order to influence white opinion at home. Little thought seems to have been given to the potential impact of these events on their relationship with the Jewish community itself. The experience of the Holocaust was to have a more decisive influence.

The unraveling of events in Fascist-occupied Europe received regular coverage in the black press. In September 1938, the *Atlanta Daily World* revealed to its readers a plan to colonize Ethiopia as a refuge for Italian—and possibly all European—Jews. In May 1945, with the war almost won, the paper enthusiastically endorsed a pronouncement submitted to President Truman by the American Jewish Committee, calling for the establishment of a permanent Commission on Human Rights, to be set up by the United Nations Conference. The purpose of this committee would be to promote human rights, with particular regard to religious liberty and racial equality. The committee would also ensure that European Jews received full restitution for all property seized, damaged, or destroyed. "Let no one," urged the *Daily World,* "underestimate the deprivation, the suffering, and plain molestation of the Jews in the present war, particularly in Germany, even during the early 'blood purge' campaigns dating before the war."[35]

There was nothing particularly unusual about this. The white South was no less ardent in its opposition to Nazism. On March 26, 1933, a nationwide protest was held in opposition to the anti-Semitic policies of the new Nazi government, the centerpoint of which was a mass rally at New York's Madison Square Garden. Of the estimated one million Americans involved in the protest, many represented southern congregations. An assembly of 150 concerned citizens met, under the auspices of the Louisville, Kentucky, Council of Churches, in the city's First Christian Church to draft a resolution "appealing for a cessation of alleged persecution of Jews in Germany."[36]

What was unusual about the angle taken by the black press was, as with its assessment of the czarist pogroms three decades earlier, the suggestion that a similar pattern of events was being played out on both sides of the Atlantic. Not all African Americans were so sure that the persecution of European Jews had any pertinence for their own people. The *Afro-American and Richmond Planet* argued that the situation paled in significance when compared with the

daily abuses suffered by black people. "Our biggest job at the moment," the paper insisted, "is to watch the Hitlers right here in our own country." W. E. B. Du Bois also demurred, although for exactly the opposite reason. According to Du Bois, "The treatment of the Negro here cannot be compared with the German situation."[37]

Such opinions did not, however, reflect black opinion as a whole. Much more pervasive was the sense of collective suffering between African Americans and Jews: although it manifested itself in different forms, the same malevolent force was at work on both sides of the Atlantic. The *Atlanta Daily World* ran a report in August 1938 from sociology student D. L. Smith on an address given by Senator Walter F. George. George had denounced the NAACP and its executive secretary, Walter White, for campaigning in support of an antilynching bill then before Congress. "So severe was this attack on the Negro racial group," reflected Smith, "that I wondered if this Georgia high official was not trying to play on the Negro role of Hitler denouncing the Jews of Germany."[38]

Although more slowly, the Jewish community in the South also began to sense the similarity between events in Europe and on their own soil. Much of this owed to the influence of the small flow of German refugees who resettled in the South during the war. Having escaped to the United States in search of freedom, the refugees were astonished to discover that their new homeland fostered an equally vicious form of discrimination. Jack Gay, who arrived in Atlanta in 1939, instinctively rejected the racism he saw all around him. "Certainly there was no feeling of any difference between black and white," he later insisted, "especially of course having been persecuted in Germany. It was the furthest thing from our mind to feel superior to anyone else."[39]

Appalled as they were by what they saw around them, what was even more galling to refugees like Gay was the fact that so many southern Jews seemed either indifferent to, or in favor of, segregation. German refugee Rabbi Albert Friedlander visited black schools in and around Vicksburg, Mississippi, where he would "talk about my experiences as a child in Germany, which interested them, until I was told it wasn't proper," and he was forced to cancel his visits. Slowly, the refugees began to persuade their coreligionists of the comparisons between African Americans and their own kind. "We did say to them," recalled Josephine Heyman of Atlanta, "now look, there's a big difference between sitting in the back of a streetcar and being led to a gas chamber, being killed. And they said, yes, of course they did, but they thought that was the beginning and that was the way they got started."[40]

To African Americans, the atrocities experienced by European Jews once again also highlighted the hypocrisy of white America, which sent troops over to combat the Fascist hordes while ignoring racism on its own soil. In a caustic commentary published in the *Richmond Planet* in April 1938, Kelly Miller quoted Adolf Hitler's "adroit, devastating rejoinder" to American accusations of the Nazis' inhumanity toward Jews: "My ruthlessness against the Jews is not more harsh and inhuman than yours against the Negroes." Miller concluded, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the mote from thine own eye, before accusing thy brother of the beam that is in his eye." If Miller was to be believed, the eradication of legal rights in Nazi Germany was nothing compared with the powerlessness of African Americans under Jim Crow. Later that month, he reported to readers of the *Richmond Planet,* "We manage by erosion or denial of law to disfranchise a greater proportion of the American electorate on account of race and color than Hitler does on account of race and creed." The *Nashville Globe* took the argument yet further, asserting that the weed on which Europe's Jews were choking emanated from a seed that had been swept across the Atlantic Ocean from the American South. The paper revealed plans in the *Schwartze Korps,* official publication of the German secret police and Hitler Elite Guard, to introduce Jim Crow–style laws on trains in an attempt to control Jews traveling in and out of the country. In adopting such a proposal, the editors of the *Schwartze Korps* noted that they were simply following the "democratic example" set by the United States, "the world's freest country." "It might be even more embarrassing to America," exclaimed the *Nashville Globe,* "if Germany should begin to lynch some of its Jewish citizens—putting them to death without the benefit of trial when they are accused of crimes, and sometimes when they are not—and then saying in answer to America's protest, 'We thought we were following the accepted custom of the United States.'"[41]

As much as the black press turned on white Americans, it also turned toward the Jewish people. In the assessment of a number of black leaders and editorialists, it was the responsibility of all those peoples who suffered at the hands of racial and religious extremists to stand united against their common foe. The *Atlanta Daily World* informed its readers in August 1938 that a congressional probe had been launched to investigate *Dynamite,* a weekly black paper in Chicago, which had issued a series of vicious attacks against Jewish landlords and storeowners on the city's south side. Of particular concern to the probe was the need to cover the suspected involvement of the secret Fascist organization, the German-American Bund. The *Daily World* was devas-

tated that African Americans could be responsible for peddling hate literature. It was anxious to avert the growth of anti-Semitism within the black community, which, the paper contended, would create a climate of intolerance in which attacks against African Americans themselves would increase. "If Negroes can be induced to stage anti-Semitic campaigns of their own, the bund will find its job easier and will have used one 'despised' race to fight the other. . . . Leaders point out that because they are both minority groups with many common interests, Negroes and Jews should be united in a common front."[42]

To many African Americans, Jews were compelled by their status as fellow victims to assist other vulnerable minority groups. In the future, their help in the struggle against segregation would be not only encouraged but expected. "We want their sympathy," exclaimed black minister Dr. R. H. Butler, "and it is their duty to give it. They should line up . . . always to lighten the burdens of the oppressed." J. C. Fairley, erstwhile president of the NAACP in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, similarly asserted in an interview that his attitude toward Jews was transformed by what he learned of the Holocaust as a soldier fighting overseas. Jews, he argued, had suffered as African Americans continued to suffer: "We always had a common cause to work together. They were more or less in the same predicament as we were in."[43]

Should Jews choose to side with the white majority, they would, in the eyes of an increasing number of African Americans, be guilty of nothing short of treason. Indicative of this, and of the incipient struggle against segregated facilities in department stores, were efforts made in 1938 by the Mobile, Alabama, branch of the NAACP to negotiate with Berney L. Strauss, president of the L. Hammel Dry Goods Co., for the provision of rest room and comfort facilities for black women and children. Since African Americans accounted for a large percentage of his custom, Strauss had no option but to appear sympathetic when he met with a delegation of NAACP activists. However, he soon reneged on his initial commitment, stating in no uncertain terms that it was "not a custom of department stores in the South to have comfort facilities for colored shoppers." Local NAACP leader J. L. LeFlore fired back. It was obscene, he stormed, that, far from standing together against their common foe, one oppressed ethnic minority should be inflicting suffering on another: "Thousands of thoughtful colored people throughout the United States have contributed efforts aimed to alleviate the plight of Jewry. . . . We are bewildered that a member of one oppressed group, because of favorable geographic and other conditions, would be unsympathetic and recalcitrant in regard to

the rights of another persecuted minority." The NAACP would be issuing leaflets to black churches and fraternal organizations, criticizing Strauss's stance. As for LeFlore himself, he and his family would refuse to shop at the store.[44]

No matter how hard Jews had tried to blur the distinction between themselves and other whites, events in Europe painfully proved that they could not escape their ancestry. A passionate editorial in the *Richmond Planet* in April 1938 revealed the "ton of irony" in press reports that Al Jolson, the Jewish entertainer who had shot to stardom through his role as the black-faced lead in "The Jazz Singer," had unsuccessfully tried to prevent African Americans from becoming residents of a California subdivision in which he owned property. "In the light of recent events in Austria, Germany, and Italy," raged the paper, "where his brethren are experiencing the full impact of racial and religious intolerance, it is inconceivable how Jolson, or any other Jew in America, could commit any act which serves to justify the atrocities being visited against his people by European tyrants and bigots. It is only to be hoped that Jolson will take a vacation abroad, get ship wrecked and finally land in Austria or Germany."[45]

Despite such impassioned editorials, it would be unwise to suggest that political turbulence in Europe provided the setting for significant collaboration between American Jews and blacks. The affinity African Americans expressed for Jews was restricted to a rhetorical level. Although they felt profound concern for the fate of European Jews, their interest was primarily in exploiting the issue in order to articulate their own plight to the American public. Nor does evidence exist of efforts made by black civil rights organizations to establish close collaborative ties with Jewish defense agencies. African Americans recognized Jews as potential political allies. An increasing number of Jews in turn joined the struggle against Jim Crow. Yet by the eve of the Second World War, there was no working alliance between the two peoples. African Americans and Jews were still divided by race, religion, and class. To most blacks, the Jew was either a remote historical character or the man who owned the local store. In the years immediately after the war, as the battle against segregation began to take greater shape, mutual cooperation would occur, at least at a national level. African Americans turned expectantly toward Jews, including those in the southern states, for support.

The sense of disappointment that African Americans suffered was to a certain degree justified. The majority of southern Jews failed to make a constructive contribution to the civil rights struggle. As the forces of anti-Semitism stirred in response to the desegregation crisis, southern Jews became increas-

ingly alarmed for their personal safety. It was difficult for them willingly to sacrifice their own social and economic status in support of someone else's cause.

African Americans can therefore also be accused of having placed unrealistic expectations on southern Jews. As Martin Luther King overestimated southern Jews, he underestimated the extreme danger to which they were exposed. Vulnerable as they were to the threat of having their families harmed and their homes and synagogues bombed, southern Jews would have shown an uncommon bravery had they supported the civil rights movement more vocally. King can also be said to have overlooked the role of a small but influential minority of southern Jews who did risk retaliation in daring to challenge the status quo. As the following chapters will reveal, southern Jews were actually more involved in the desegregation crisis than either the African American leadership or later scholars of the civil rights movement recognized. The contribution of these individuals appears all the more remarkable given the dangers that Jews faced during the desegregation crisis.

3 THE RESURGENCE OF SOUTHERN ANTI-SEMITISM

By the early 1950s, Jews appeared to have carved a comfortable niche in southern society. The years immediately after the Second World War witnessed a resurgence among American Jews. After the troubled interwar era, when institutional anti-Semitism had spread throughout the United States, Jews reestablished their patriotic credentials through loyal service on both the battlefield and the home front. Southern Jews shared in this success. Predominantly city dwellers, they continued to constitute only a fraction of the total population. According to the census, of the 40 million people who resided in the region, only 265,000 were Jewish. Particularly through their role in the retail trade, Jews were nonetheless able to exert an influence that was disproportionate to their numbers. As the sociologist Alfred Hero observed, "Jews throughout the South have been on the average much better off, better educated, more concentrated in elevated society and occupational groups . . . than Gentiles."[1]

This process of acculturation had, however, only been achieved through considerable compromise. Southern Jews remained profoundly concerned about their personal security. Their presence was tolerated, even welcomed, by white southerners, but only so long as they publicly conformed to the cultural mores of the region. Southern Jews became social chameleons, changing their colors so as to blend into the background. Evidence of this need to belong was everywhere. Traditional religious observance was often as low as intermarriage was high. A despairing editorial in the *Southern Jewish Weekly* observed how Jewish organizations throughout the South sponsored social events without any attempt to serve kosher food. With "all the moral force at our command," the paper urged Jews throughout the region to observe dietary laws with greater diligence. The decline of religious orthodoxy was indeed widespread. "One cannot say there is a distinct Jewish culture in New Orleans," Rabbi Julian Feibelman of the city's Temple Sinai observed:

TABLE 1: THE SOUTHERN JEWISH POPULATION IN 1954

State	*Jewish Population*
Alabama	8,584
Arkansas	2,354
Florida	76,940
Georgia	17,530
Kentucky	10,157
Louisiana	13,949
Mississippi	2,457
North Carolina	4,632
South Carolina	3,999
Tennessee	14,155
Texas	51,143
Virginia	22,863*
Total	228,763

Source: American Jewish Yearbook, vols. 55 and 56, ed. by Morris Fine (New York and Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication Society, 1954 and 1955).

* Figures for Virginia include estimates for several communities made before 1954.

"There is rather a distinct New Orleans culture of which the Jewish community is part."[2]

Jews understood above all that the continued goodwill of white Gentiles could only be guaranteed through their uncritical acceptance of the southern caste system. Although most southern Jews sympathized with the incipient civil rights movement, political realities compelled their silence. When the northern journalist John Gunther attended a social function in Natchez, Mississippi, shortly after the Second World War, he made the mistake of expressing sympathy for the plight of African Americans. In his words, "Several leading citizens of the town almost broke blood vessels to exclaim that I must be a 'Communist' or 'be influenced by Jews' to hold such views." Faced with this pervasive sense of suspicion, southern Jews were forced to watch their every word and action. According to an opinion poll conducted in 1959, southern Jews were considerably more supportive of civil rights initiatives than were white Gentiles. So successfully, however, had Jews concealed their true convictions that only 15 percent of Gentiles believed them to be in favor of integration; 67 percent confessed not to know how Jews felt.[3]

Even in cities with a relatively progressive reputation, such as Dallas and

Little Rock, Jews carefully avoided controversy. The same was true in Atlanta, arguably the most cosmopolitan city in the South. According to sociologist Solomon Sutker, local Jews were "conspicuous by their lack of active political participation."[4]

For a time it seemed that southern Jews had succeeded in deflecting accusations of their disloyalty. Arch segregationist politicians such as Richard Russell and Herman Talmadge were sufficiently confident of Jewish support that they championed the fledgling republic of Israel.[5]

Yet no matter how hard southern Jews strove to secure a state of rapprochement with the white Gentile majority, their political status was still inherently unstable. Jews hoped that so long as they appeared to support the status quo, their security would not be at risk. This tactic contained a fundamental paradox. In their very support of segregation, Jews were upholding the same caste system that led to their own marginalization. In so doing they condemned their own community to a future in which it could never enjoy full equality or freedom. A story told by the Jewish journalist Harry Golden serves to illustrate this point. In 1957 Herman Talmadge attended a Bonds for Israel dinner at the Mayfair Club in Atlanta. Golden was appalled that he should have been invited. The Jews of Atlanta, he insisted, should know better than to socialize with such a bigot. Talmadge was, after all, an avowed white supremacist. "If God wanted us to mix," he once said, "he would have made us all of one race." It was foolish, asserted Golden, for Jews to fraternize with such a man. Race-baiting politicians like Talmadge created a wider climate of intolerance and oppression in which no minority could ever be entirely safe. As Golden put it: "There is no hiding place down here. No more. Each thing is a piece of the WHOLE thing; the struggle for democracy; for human freedom; for the dignity of the human spirit."[6]

These words were to prove prophetic. Throughout history Jews have been blamed for tumultuous social upheaval. The civil rights era was no exception. As political leaders like Russell and Talmadge mobilized a movement of massive resistance against integration, they created a sense of crisis throughout the South. Besieged and paranoid southerners began to question the loyalties of anyone who did not stand steadfast alongside them in the struggle against desegregation. As the desegregation crisis intensified, so the position of the southern liberal progressively deteriorated. In the words of Pamela Tyler, those southern whites who dared to speak out in support of desegregation were considered "first inconvenient, then controversial, then dangerous."

Southerners cracked down on any dissent within their own ranks through a number of brutal reprisals, including social ostracism, economic boycotts, and even violence.[7]

Torn between their natural inclination to support integration and the necessity of ensuring their own survival, southern Jews attempted at least publicly to observe a strict neutrality. As battle lines hardened, however, the middle ground was rapidly eroded. Latent suspicions about the political loyalties of southern Jews were rekindled with a vengeance. The plight of southern Jews was compounded by the conspicuous involvement of their northern coreligionists in the civil rights crusade. Anti-Semitic extremists seized the opportunity to portray Jews as the masterminds behind the integrationist movement.

In January 1959, members of the liberal Southern Interagency Conference agreed "to bring to the attention of our respective constituents the increase in anti-Semitic literature being distributed in the South."[8] It actually seems implausible that this phenomenon should have escaped anyone's notice. The desegregation crisis sparked the largest explosion of anti-Semitism in southern history. According to one estimate by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), distribution of anti-Semitic material in the South increased by 400 percent in the five years following the Supreme Court decision. The political dangers were more pronounced in certain parts of the South than others. Jews were especially vulnerable in the small towns of the Deep South, where they lacked security in numbers and where massive resistance was at its most militant. Yet even in the more cosmopolitan cities of the South, such as New Orleans and Atlanta, Jews were confronted with an outburst of anti-Semitic rhetoric, death threats, and dynamite attacks. Although the political climate differed from one community to another, a pervasive sense of fear seized Jews throughout the South. As the journalist Hodding Carter asserted, "The white South is as united as 30,000,000 people can be in its insistence upon segregation."[9]

It is only in this context of extreme danger that the consequent actions or inaction of southern Jews can be understood. Their standard of living, their social status, and their influence in civic affairs were all entirely reliant upon their relationship with a white Gentile majority sworn to the preservation of racial segregation. It is therefore no surprise that as a community southern Jews suffered a debilitating sense of fear throughout the desegregation crisis. What is more remarkable in the light of what follows is the willingness of

individual Jews to risk retaliation by identifying themselves with the integrationist movement.

THE WHITE CITIZENS' COUNCIL

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the segregation of public schools was unconstitutional. The ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* was hailed in many northern states as a decisive victory in the struggle against racial inequality. Reaction in the South was mixed. In some areas there was a shocked silence, in others a reluctant acceptance. The Deep South responded with outright opposition. Within a few months, segregationists mobilized themselves in defiant resistance of desegregation.

Organized legal resistance to the *Brown* decision was embodied in the White Citizens' Council, founded in Indianola, Mississippi, by Robert Patterson in July 1954. By the end of the decade, Citizens' Councils had been established in every major southern city. Committed to counteracting the notion that all segregationists were extremists operating on the fringes of society, the Councils drew their members predominantly from the professional and business classes. Although the size of membership was often contested, a safe estimate puts it around three hundred thousand.[10]

The image of respectability cultivated by the Councils belied a darker reality. The more liberal elements of the community, which often included Jews, found themselves coerced and cajoled into joining the Councils. In Montgomery, Alabama, for instance, the Council "began a door-to-door membership drive threatening to publish the names of all those who refused to join." It was within most Councils' power to make life extremely unpleasant for those who refused to join them, not least since their membership often included the most powerful men in the community: mayors, chiefs of police, and local business leaders. Some southern Jews, especially those isolated in small towns, found the $3 or $5 membership fee a small price to pay for safety from reprisal. "Before the advent of the Councils," asserted David Halberstam, "a man who spoke up against Jim Crow merely ran the risk of being known as a radical; today he faces an organized network of groups consciously working to remove dissenters—his job and his family's happiness may be at stake." Bea Gotthelf of Jackson, Mississippi, offers one example of this intimidation. Her husband, Harold, received a call from an acquaintance who asked him whether he employed a certain African American in his laundry

business. The employee's child was involved in efforts to desegregate one of the city's public schools. "I'm calling on behalf of the Citizens' Council," continued the caller, "and we want you to fire that man." Harold, an active supporter of integration himself, refused. "Well," came the reply, "you'll be sorry." Fearing the threat to both himself and his employee, Gotthelf posted a security patrol outside his business for several weeks afterward.[11]

Did the Citizens' Councils specifically target Jews? It is true that the Councils never officially endorsed anti-Semitism, a decision which was to some extent determined by genuine ideological convictions. Those segregationists who sought to challenge the Supreme Court decision on a strictly legal or constitutional basis believed it would be counterproductive to engage in irrational and emotional rhetoric about a Jewish conspiracy against the South. The decision to dissociate the Councils from anti-Semitic extremism was also compelled by pragmatic considerations. Members argued that white southerners must stand united in the face of federally mandated integration. It was therefore unwise to alienate Jews who were already actively involved within the Councils. Others feared that any flirtation with anti-Semitism would irreparably damage the image that the Councils attempted to cultivate as the respectable face of segregation. Anxious to avoid such a public relations disaster, Councils across the South made a great show of expelling any members who preached anti-Semitic propaganda. In June 1958, the Capitol Citizens' Council of Little Rock expelled three of its members—Julian Miller, Will J. Smith, and Robert Ewing Brown—for alleged anti-Semitism. The Alabama Association of Citizens' Councils similarly condemned an anti-Semitic pamphlet distributed by the Elmore County Citizens' Council, announcing that the local organization was not affiliated with the statewide body.[12]

Sensitivity over the issue resulted in two highly publicized splits within the Citizens' Councils. Reports broke in March 1956 that an ideological rift had torn the Alabama White Citizens' Council in two. The ultrasegregationist Asa Carter had been expelled for inviting anti-Semitic speakers to recruitment drives and for demanding that Jews be removed from the organization's membership roster. Carter had then established the North Alabama Citizens' Council, which excluded anyone who did not "believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ," underlining the message by including in its journal "an attack on the 'Hadassah newsletter' for picturing a Negro and white child together." Horrified that this might give the movement a reputation for reckless fanaticism rather than responsible leadership, other members established their own Central Alabama Citizens' Council. According to its initial press release, this latter

group was "not interested in religious bias or prejudice" but concerned only with maintaining segregation.[13]

A similar episode occurred in Louisiana two years later. The Greater New Orleans Citizens' Council was thrown into turmoil in November 1958 by the founding of a breakaway faction, the South Louisiana Citizens' Council. Central to the split was the concern of moderate Council members at the damage being done to the organization's image by its own president, Leander Perez. As the school crisis in New Orleans intensified, Perez became more outspoken in his belief that Jews were to blame. In February 1956, shortly after a federal district court had ordered the desegregation of the public schools in New Orleans, Perez announced publicly that "Zionist Jews are leaders in forcing communistic integration." According to Perez, African Americans who were otherwise content to accept the status quo were being used as the unwitting pawns in a Zionist conspiracy to stir up hatred between the races and thereby destroy "our white Christian civilization." Alarmed that outsiders would associate the Council with the worst excesses of racial bigotry, moderates withdrew their memberships and established their own organization. Their efforts to restore the Council's image of respectability do not, however, appear to have met with any notable success. Free from the restraining influence of his more moderate associates, Perez only intensified his attacks against Jews. Integration in the New Orleans public schools came into effect on November 14, 1960. The next night, at an assembly of the Greater New Orleans Citizens' Council, Perez informed an audience of five or six thousand that, while he was no anti-Semite, he was only too aware that there were "too many damn Jews in Communist cells who are conspiring against your freedom and liberty." Up to 1,500 copies of a special New Orleans edition of a rabidly anti-Semitic newsletter, the *Thunderbolt*, were also distributed at the meeting. The response of the South Louisiana Citizens' Council was apparently one of silence.[14]

As this episode would suggest, although the Citizens' Councils never sanctioned the anti-Semitism of their more extremist members, they were also unable to silence them. From their very inception, anti-Semites saw the Councils as a means of disseminating their hate literature. The Mississippi White Citizens' Council's initial recruitment drive took the form of a series of letter campaigns. Issued on August 21, 1954, the second of these letters contained a reading list on desegregation for all new and prospective members. Among the publications listed were a number of notorious anti-Semitic hate sheets, including Gerald L. K. Smith's *Christian Nationalist Crusade* and

Gerald Winrod's *Defenders*. The list drew an angry response from the Jewish defense agencies. Clearly taken aback, Robert Patterson wrote to reassure the agencies that the Council was not anti-Semitic and that the inclusion of the offending materials had been a mistake. As he ingratiatingly wrote, "There is less discrimination against the Jew in the South than in any other section of the nation, so some of my Jewish friends tell me." Had the letter ended there, Patterson might have allayed the suspicions of the defense agencies. He could not help betraying his own prejudices, though. "I am not anti-Semitic," he asserted, "but I am against any man or group [that] aids and abets the NAACP, which is trying to destroy our way of life." Naturally, it just so happened that many of these groups were Jewish.[15]

The blatant insincerity of Robert Patterson betrayed the powerful influence of racial extremists within the Citizens' Council. As a correspondent for the *New York Times* argued, the belief that Jews were orchestrating the civil rights movement from behind the scenes was "one of the principal threads woven through the talks and literature of the extremist council leaders and followers."[16] Although some Jews joined the Citizens' Councils with the express purpose of containing the growth of anti-Semitism, they do not appear to have succeeded. Indeed, Jews were deliberately excluded from certain Councils, including the Dallas White Citizens' Church Council, which refused membership to anyone who did not believe "in the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior."[17]

In speeches delivered across the South, Citizens' Council activists denounced Jews as the strategists and financiers of the civil rights movement. F. J. Shriver of the Citizens' Council in Elloree, South Carolina, asserted that integrationism was "part of an international communist plot made and being executed by the Jews." Millard Grubbs of the Kentucky Citizens' Council issued a statement that "the Zionist Atlantic money mob has control of both the Democratic and Republican parties." In March 1956, the ADL office in New Orleans reported that Curt Copeland, head of the Citizens' Council of Arkansas, had openly attacked Jews during a speech in Memphis. Despite the reassurances of moderate segregationists, the Councils clearly constituted a profound threat to southern Jews.[18]

A NEW AND DEADLIER STRAIN

While the Citizens' Councils continued to send out conflicting signals on the issue of anti-Semitism, the message transmitted by some of the more extremist elements within the massive resistance movement was al-

together less equivocal. Anti-Semites operated across the South throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but their numbers were so small and disorganized that they could be dismissed as harmless cranks. In 1949, for instance, the elderly millionaire George W. Armstrong had offered a gift of oil rights with the potential value of $50 million to the Jefferson Military College in Mississippi. There were only two conditions: the college must devote itself to the teaching of Anglo-Saxon supremacy, and it should exclude African Americans and Jews from the student body. The college declined the gift.[19]

In response to the *Brown* decision, anti-Semites organized themselves in fanatical opposition to what they believed was a Jewish conspiracy against the South. Hate groups across the country recognized the desegregation crisis as a perfect opportunity to incite anti-Semitism among white southerners. Propaganda conceived with the purpose of channeling white resentment toward Jews swept into the South in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling. The predicament facing southern Jews was summed up by Irwin Schulman, regional director of the ADL's southeastern office. In a confidential memo about the integration issue in Jackson, Mississippi, written in June 1963, Schulman observed, "We oftentimes find that wherever there is tension and trouble in a community the Jews are blamed. Many segregationists in Jackson continue to maintain that the local Negroes are happy with their lot and do not wish to see the situation change. . . . As in all too many cases, we find the Jew being used to fill this role, i.e., 'It is the Jews who are pushing the Negro and this is why we are having all of this trouble.'"[20]

Invariably, it was when a community experienced its most profound moment of crisis that such pamphlets would most often appear in people's mailboxes or be pushed into their hands at public meetings. One example of the anti-Semitic literature distributed in Little Rock during the city's school crisis was a handbill entitled "Jews, Integration, Segregation," written by Al Misegadis of Lander, Wyoming. "Mr. Jew," maintained Misegadis, "does not have the guts to do his own fighting, but through sly and insidious agitation, is trying to stir up the gullible Negro to do the dirty work for him." Anti-Semites furiously peddled the idea that civil rights organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were just a front for Jews conspiring to achieve world domination. Clyde L. Barr of upstate Fayetteville regularly reprinted a selection of "facts" about Jews from anti-Semitic journals throughout the country, which he then circulated across Arkansas. Much of this material was sent to Little Rock in the expectation of exploiting existing tensions within the city. In a list of ten things that Barr believed all concerned white citizens should know about the NAACP, he as-

serted that the organization was "financed and underwritten" by Jews. Equally revealing was the "documentary fact that NO Negro has ever been president of this group."[21]

Many of the organizations and individuals spreading anti-Semitic material were not from the South. *Common Sense,* perhaps the most heavily distributed of all the hate newsletters, was published by Conde McGinley in Union, New Jersey. Other leading anti-Semitic literature included the *Defender,* produced by Gerald Winrod in Wichita, Kansas; the *American Nationalist,* edited by Frank Britton of Inglewood, California; and *The Cross and the Flag,* official organ of Gerald L. K. Smith's Christian Nationalist Party.

Yet, by the 1950s, organized anti-Semitism was also a growing phenomenon in the South. Arnold Forster of the ADL calculated in 1958 that there were as many as forty anti-Semitic groups operating in the region, about twenty-five of which were engaged in more direct action than the mere distribution of misinformation. Of particular concern to the Jewish defense agencies was the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. The notorious segregationist John Kasper articulated the paranoid fantasies of the Klan at a rally held in Chiefland, Florida, in March 1956. "There would be no Negro problem," he insisted, "without the Jew problem. Jews throughout the world are the force behind the campaign in the United States to integrate the races." Still more sensationalist was Horace Sherman Miller, who published the newsletter *Aryan Views* from his home in Waco, Texas. "JEW COMMUNISTS SAY INTEGRATE ROB-RAPE-RIOT-KILL."[22]

The Klan did not constitute the only menace to southern Jews. Other organizations sworn to eradicate the supposed Jewish conspiracy appeared throughout the South. Among these organizations were several in the supposedly progressive city of Atlanta. "Jewish Communists behind Atlanta's School Segregation Suit," exclaimed one leaflet circulated by the Atlanta Anti-Communist Party. "Jews behind Race Mixing" was the equally emphatic accusation of the Christian Anti-Jewish Party.[23]

This latter organization was founded in 1952, out of the ashes of a paramilitary organization calling itself the Columbians, which had actively conspired to take over the state of Georgia. The leaders of the Christian Anti-Jewish Party were chiropractor and former Columbian Edward Fields and attorney Jesse B. Stoner. Of the two, Stoner was the most notorious. At the age of eighteen he had become a Klan organizer in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 1944 he addressed a petition to Congress, urging it to pass a resolution "recognizing the fact that the Jews are the children of the devil, and that, consequently,

they constitute a grave menace to the United States of America." Four years later, Stoner made a stab at mainstream respectability when he ran for the third congressional district of Tennessee. His candidacy, however, proved a dismal failure, securing only 541 of the 30,000 votes cast.[24]

Nonetheless, the election result only appears to have strengthened his resolve. The Christian Anti-Jewish Party provided a new vehicle for him to voice his hatred of Jews. "If our great and beloved AMERICA is to live," exclaimed a party leaflet, "Jewry must die." Six years after its formation, the party was amalgamated into the National States' Rights Party (NSRP), of which Fields and Stoner were the frontmen. Initially basing its operations in Knoxville, Tennessee, the NSRP established its permanent headquarters on Bessemer Road in Birmingham, Alabama. The organization swallowed up several splinter groups, including the Seaboard Citizens' Council, as it spread to thirty-six cities across the United States. By the early 1960s, some 35,000 copies of the NSRP publication, the *Thunderbolt*, were being distributed every month. As for its message, repeated in every edition, the *Thunderbolt* urged its readers to reserve their wrath not for "the ignorant Negro" but for the real mastermind behind the civil rights movement, the Jew. In a "Special Georgia Edition" published in February 1961, the paper argued that Atlanta would act as the battleground on which the fate of the entire South would be determined. Unless something was done to undermine the power of the city's Jewish population, the *Thunderbolt* feared that defeat would be inevitable. The leaders of Atlanta's racially moderate administration were nothing more than "stooges," elected into office on the back of bloc voting by integrationist Jews. In the paper's own words: "The Jews have long believed that they would have to integrate Atlanta before they could integrate the rest of the South."[25]

It was Jews in Birmingham who inevitably most feared the threat of the NSRP. The city's Jewish Community Council launched a campaign in March 1964 to discredit the organization, calling on both the press and civic and political leaders to denounce the NSRP. A three-member team from the ADL's national office were called in to assist the campaign. "It is essential," insisted Community Council president Alex Rittenbaum, "that we develop within our community a climate of opinion which would reject the 'hate-lers' in our midst."[26]

Of all the political mavericks attracted to the NSRP, none was perceived as a more dangerous threat to the southern Jewish community than Rear Adm. John G. Crommelin. Having attained an excellent service record during the

Second World War, Crommelin was forced into retirement in 1950, owing to public attacks made against his superiors during the controversy over unification of the armed services. Crommelin immediately attempted to establish a new career in politics. He ran as a Democrat in the senatorial elections of 1950, 1954, 1956, 1960, and 1962, always claiming to be the "white man's candidate." In 1958, he made an unsuccessful bid to become governor of Alabama. The following year, he received 10 percent of the vote in the Montgomery mayoral election.[27]

It was not until 1956 that Crommelin began to campaign on an overtly anti-Semitic platform. In November 1955 he had joined Asa Carter's North Alabama Citizens' Council. Carter soon influenced the rear admiral. Like other extremists of his ilk, Crommelin began to espouse the idea that African Americans would have continued to live a contented existence under segregation, were it not for the interference of Communist Jews. "The Negro is the malarial germ," he once remarked, "but the Jew is the mosquito." Crommelin's paranoid delusions about Jews became more pronounced with the passage of time. On February 25, 1958, the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce hosted a dinner at which gubernatorial candidates were invited to speak. Crommelin used his allotted ten minutes to warn his audience of a "Communist-Jewish conspiracy to control the world with headquarters in Israel and the U.S.," adding that journalists were deliberately disguising the danger posed to the American people. Such outspoken attacks ensured enthusiastic endorsements for Crommelin's candidacy from the anti-Semitic press, including *Common Sense, The Cross and the Flag,* and the *American Nationalist.* Crommelin struck less of a chord with the general public. With less than 1.5 percent of the vote, he came in eleventh out of fourteen candidates. Not that this dissuaded him. Crommelin cemented his allegiance to anti-Semitic extremists by agreeing to run as the NSRP's vice presidential candidate. The joint ticket of Crommelin and Arkansas governor Orval Faubus received 47,522 votes.[28]

Widespread support may not have come Crommelin's way, but his continuous campaigning meant that he was never far from the public eye. This was not a situation that pleased southern Jews. The Jewish Community Council in Birmingham made an unsuccessful attempt to prevent Crommelin from issuing a senatorial campaign speech on WAPI, Channel 13, in April 1962. The rear admiral announced: "Our homeland, the great state of Alabama, listen carefully, has been selected by the Communist-Jewish conspirators as the proving ground for testing ways and means to carry out their plot." It did not

do Crommelin any good. Dejected by another ignominious defeat, he decided never again to run for political office.[29]

The failure of anti-Semitic extremists to attract more widespread political support, however, did not make them any less of a threat to the Jewish community. By definition they were willing to respect the traditional political process only so long as it responded to their aims. When it failed to do so, they searched for more dangerous alternatives.

THE SYNAGOGUE BOMBINGS

Had the bomb exploded, its impact would have been deadly. The meeting of the Temple Sisterhood having just disbanded, caretaker Eddie Edwards began a final inspection of the synagogue's grounds before closing up for the night. He found a package leaning against the rear wall of the building. Inside was an aluminum cylinder with six sticks of dynamite. The fuse had been lit, but evidently it had burned itself out. The forty members of the Temple Sisterhood had just escaped an unpleasant fate.[30]

The attempted bombing of Temple Beth-El in Charlotte, North Carolina, on November 11, 1957, marked the beginning of a series of terrorist attacks against southern synagogues. Four months later, on February 11, 1958, a valise containing thirty sticks of dynamite was discovered outside the wall of Temple Emanuel, in the neighboring city of Gastonia. Once again, only a faulty fuse saved the synagogue.[31]

Next time, however, the terrorists were not to prove so incompetent. On March 16, 1958, they scored their first success, striking not once but twice. The calm of night was shattered at 2:30 A.M. when an explosion tore through the school annex of Miami's Orthodox Temple Beth-El. Such was the strength of the blast that it woke hundreds of people for several blocks around the synagogue. "I rushed out in my pajamas," exclaimed Simon Seiden, vice president of the congregation. "I thought an airplane had fallen." Damage to the seven-year-old school building would later be estimated at over $30,000. Eighteen hours later, a second bombing occurred, this time at the Jewish community center in Nashville. The explosion smashed the windows and front doors, and brought the ceiling in the reception hall crashing down. The repair bill was calculated at approximately $6,000.[32]

A month later, the bombers attacked again, although they bungled both efforts. Dynamite planted outside the Conservative Beth-El synagogue in Birmingham on April 28, 1958, failed to explode when the fuse burned out

a minute away from the detonating caps. Just over twenty-four hours later, in Jacksonville, Florida, the Jewish community center survived a similar attempt.[33]

Security at synagogues across the South was immediately intensified. Temple president Phil Back urged the use of a constant guard around B'nai Israel in Little Rock during the High Holidays. His idea, however, was vetoed. The temple's board of trustees expressed "some concern but no great trepidation about either the position of Little Rock Jewry or the safety of the two synagogues in that city." Events in late October 1958 might have provoked a change of heart. Rabbi Ira Sanders received two letters stating that the synagogue would be destroyed at precisely 9:20 P.M. on Friday. A similar threat was sent to Rabbi Irwin Groner of the Conservative synagogue, Agudath Achim. Determined not to make any concession to the terrorists, Sanders announced, "We are going ahead with our normal duties." The rabbi succeeded in calling his assailants' bluff. Neither synagogue was ever bombed.[34]

As events elsewhere were to prove, however, southern Jews could not afford to be complacent. On Sunday, October 12, 1958, shortly after 3:30 A.M., an explosion ripped through the Reform Temple on Peachtree Street in Atlanta. No one was hurt although the blast, which woke people several blocks away, caused almost $200,000 in damages.[35]

THE SMOKE SETTLES

Any attempt to explain the cause of the synagogue bombings is complicated by the fact that no one was ever convicted for them. Several Klansmen were convicted in Charlotte after their arrest for possession of loaded dynamite, although their involvement in the attempted bombing of the temple could not be proved.[36] Without the confessions of those responsible for committing the attacks, any rationalization therefore must rely, at least to some extent, on conjecture.

What is perhaps most significant is that there was no obvious pattern to the synagogue attacks. The terrorists appear to have targeted Jewish communities at random. While cities such as Birmingham and Atlanta served as the main battlegrounds for the civil rights struggle, others, such as Gastonia, seemingly had little or no bearing on the issue. Indeed, what is most significant about the synagogue attacks is that, with the exception of Little Rock and Atlanta, none of the congregations targeted by the terrorists contained any members who had played a conspicuous role in the integration issue. David Weinstein,

administrative director of the Jewish community center in Jacksonville, was utterly at a loss to explain why anyone would want to bomb the building. "There has been no friction between members of our faith and outside groups," he alleged, "and segregation is not even an issue in Jacksonville. The subject has never even come up in our congregation." Members of Temple Beth-El in Miami had similarly refrained from any association with either side in the civil rights struggle. Most of the congregation, observed Nathan Perlmutter, were "quiet, elderly people for whom the synagogue is strictly a place for worship." The situation was very much the same in Charlotte and Gastonia. Rabbi William Silverman of Nashville was also adamant that the bombing of the community center was in no way attributable, as had been suggested, to the stance taken against segregation by certain members of his congregation. On the contrary, he claimed, the Jews of Nashville had studiously avoided any public statements in support of desegregation. "I say this," the rabbi informed reporters, "not with pride, but with a profound sense of shame, that with the exceptions of my sermons during the High Holidays last September, and one Parent-Teacher Association address . . . I have not made a single public utterance or statement on this subject of integration, and have not been as active in behalf of social justice as my faith demands." [37]

The indiscriminate nature of the attacks therefore served as a powerful warning to southern Jews that not even a strategy of political silence could safeguard them from racist fanatics. This strategy was adopted in the belief that by dissociating themselves from the civil rights movement, Jews would remain immune from retaliatory action by white extremists. Such an approach was based on the premise that segregationists would cease their persecution of Jews when they no longer perceived them as a political threat. This, however, was to assume that segregationist policy was based on rational political calculation, rather than on blind racial prejudice. What Jews were, or were not, saying about integration was therefore largely irrelevant. Although Orthodox Jews in particular had refrained from any public association with the civil rights movement, this had not ensured the security of Temple Beth-El in Miami. Anti-Semites by definition were not interested in denominational differences between Jews. They regarded them all with the same pathological hatred.

The synagogue attacks of 1957 and 1958 were in truth the culmination of an orchestrated campaign against southern Jews that had been conceived several years earlier. There had indeed been a number of outrages against Jewish institutions three years before the *Brown* decision. On December 2, 1951, the

Miami Hebrew School and Congregation were damaged by dynamite hurled from a passing car. One week later, the Jewish Center in Coral Gables survived a similar attack when the fuse to the explosive came loose. In all, about a dozen incidents occurred in Florida during the fall of 1951. Over the next twelve months, Atlanta was similarly flooded with anti-Semitic materials bearing the imprint of the Christian Anti-Jewish Party.[38]

These episodes attracted little attention, not least because the Jewish communities involved wanted to avoid any adverse publicity. The tensions caused by the integration crisis, in contrast, could be exploited fully by the extremists to score a more effective propaganda victory. For instance, shortly before the dynamiting of the Jewish Community Center in Nashville, the Cotton Hattie School became the first educational establishment in the city to open its doors to nonwhite students.

The Supreme Court decision in effect helped to legitimize the white southern extremists' otherwise irrational hatred of Jews. Blaming Jews for masterminding the integrationist offensive against the South was a means of establishing an ideological underpinning for their anti-Semitism. The first Rabbi Silverman knew of the attack upon the Nashville community center was when he received a telephone call from someone claiming to be a member of an organization called the Confederate Union. "We have just dynamited the Jewish community center," the caller announced. "Next will be the temple and next will be any other nigger-loving place or nigger-loving person in Nashville." Since Silverman, by his own confession, had done little to involve himself in the integration issue, the remark came as something of a surprise. Such, however, was the strength of anti-Semitism among certain extremists that they could convince themselves that all Jews must be implicated in the integration issue, whether the evidence supported such a conclusion or not. According to Rabbi Jacob Rothschild of Atlanta, "The lunatic fringe doesn't really care who it bombs—any minority is weak and any who are weak are its prey." Harry Golden, editor of the *Carolina Israelite,* concurred with this assessment. Ignoring the role played by the federal government, civil rights organizations, and the social action committees of other religious groups, extremists, he claimed, were able to focus the force of their resistance against one easily identifiable target: Jews. Of the anti-Semitic pamphlets flooding the South, Golden observed, "Why bother about all these things when the cause of your sorrows, your failures and hatreds are all wrapped up in a single piece of paper?"[39]

Yet if the terrorists believed that the desegregation crisis would provide a

perfect cover for their activities, they were very much mistaken. Although they succeeded in dynamiting a number of synagogues, their tactics can still be said to have misfired.

Anxious to expose what they believed to be an interstate conspiracy, national Jewish organizations demanded that the federal government launch an immediate investigation into the attacks. Support for such an initiative was offered by various political and religious groups across the country. The National Council of Churches dispatched a telegram to Attorney General William Rogers, stating, "There may be concerted action involving people in several states to commit violence against religious institutions. We feel this situation warrants a thorough investigation by the FBI."[40]

At the same time, national Jewish leaders in New York sought to calm the fears of their southern coreligionists. Far from suggesting a rising tide of anti-Semitism among southerners, the bombings, they insisted, were the work of extremists operating on the fringes of society. Speaking in the wake of the attack on the Atlanta Reform Temple, Dr. Joachim Prinz, president of the American Jewish Congress, asserted, "There is less organized anti-Semitism in America than ever before." Across the country, he continued, Jews enjoyed "complete economic, cultural, and political integration." As for the sudden emergence of anti-Semitic violence, it was, Prinz contended, "the work of a few crackpots." This line of argument was adopted in subsequent speeches by Philip M. Klutznick, president of B'nai B'rith, and Arnold Forster, national civil rights director of the Anti-Defamation League. A year after the Atlanta bombing, the ADL also published the results of a survey on anti-Semitism conducted among southern clergymen. Only 2 percent of those interviewed in the Deep South believed that there had been any deterioration in Jewish-Gentile relations during the desegregation crisis. In the rest of the South, the situation had remained even more stable, with no one at all seeing any shift toward anti-Semitism.[41]

The arguments adopted by national Jewish officials amounted to more than empty rhetoric. Southern authorities moved swiftly to secure the arrest of those responsible. Expressions of public outrage also emanated across the region. The failed bomb attempt on Temple Beth-El did little to fill Charlotte Jewry with any fear of future threats. According to Al Vorspan of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, the congregation believed that "the incident might have been a boyish prank or the act of a lunatic" and, as such, was unlikely to be repeated. Moreover, Police Chief Frank Littlejohn was able to convince the city's Jews that his force was commit-

ted to catching the culprits. "Such tomfoolery may be tolerated in some other parts of the South," warned Littlejohn, "but it won't be tolerated in Charlotte."[42]

Authorities in "other parts of the South" proved no less cooperative. The abortive attack on Temple Beth-El in Birmingham provoked expressions of sympathy throughout Alabama. Governor James Folsom authorized a reward of $2,000 for evidence leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. A separate fund established under the custodianship of senior federal court judge Seybourne Lynne attracted $9,650 in donations within four days, a figure which, by the end of June, stood at $15,896. Police Commissioner Eugene Connor called in an explosives expert and requested assistance from the FBI in order to facilitate the efforts of the three detectives immediately assigned to the case. He also expressed the hope that, as soon as it reconvened, the state legislature would enact legislation making it an offense punishable by death to dynamite any unoccupied house, school, or church. "I am confident," contended Label Katz, national chairman of the B'nai B'rith Youth Commission, "that the Jewish community of Birmingham, and indeed of the entire South, is heartened by these positive expressions of solidarity and support." Police Commissioner Connor's call for federal assistance went unanswered. Nonetheless, on May 3, 1958, it was announced that a network had been established, linking the police departments of twenty-eight southern cities in an exchange of information on the synagogue bombings. A combined total of $55,700 was put forward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the culprits.[43]

Nowhere was anger at the terrorist campaign more intense than in Atlanta. Initially, there was a great reluctance on the part of the city's Jews to issue any public statements that might further antagonize their enemies. It was agreed, at an emergency meeting of the Community Relations Council, that no one except Rabbi Jacob Rothschild and temple president William Schwartz should speak to reporters. Alarm spread when it was discovered that Arthur J. Levin, southeastern director of the ADL, had decided to break his vow of silence. Levin launched into an assault against the bigotry he believed ran rampant in the South, and his words were duly reprinted on the front pages of both the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution* the following morning. To the Community Relations Committee, such an outburst could only prove counterproductive, the use of a flame thrower to put out the fire. "These statements were very detrimental," exclaimed temple member Paul Ginsburg, in a letter to David Zeff of the Council of the Jewish Federation of Welfare Funds.

Levin's tirade, he continued, was potentially "very damaging to the public relations of our people in this Community." What had prevented any serious upset was the fact that Levin's words had been swallowed up by the deluge of sympathetic responses to the bombing.[44]

Alarmed at the potential impact that the bombing of the Reform Temple might have upon their city's image of being "too busy to hate," Atlantans inundated Rabbi Rothschild with words of remorse. Mayor William B. Hartsfield blamed southern leaders whose outspoken resistance to the Supreme Court decision had, he alleged, led to a loss of respect for the law throughout the region: "Whether they like it or not, every rabble-raising politician is the godfather of the cross-burners and the dynamiters, who are giving the South a bad name." The local press was equally forthright in its condemnation of the attack. "For a long time now," asserted Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution,* "it has been needful for all Americans to stand up and be counted on the side of the law and the due process of law—even when to do so goes against personal beliefs and emotions. It is late. But there is yet time." Words of sympathy came from more unexpected quarters. A resolution adopted by the Georgia Dental Association at its annual meeting in Atlanta revealed a previously unknown connection between dental repair work and the restoration of community relations. "As members of the healing arts," it read, "we are dedicated to love and brotherhood and wish . . . to work to the end that violence and pagan attacks against the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God be stamped out." Practical offers of assistance were equally abundant. In the five days following the bomb blast, over $20,000 had been received in donations for the reward fund established by the mayor. The nearby Peachtree Christian Church immediately offered full use of its building and resources while repairs were being made to the temple. Other churches made similar offers.[45]

The Atlanta bombing also offered further evidence of efforts by the Citizens' Council to avoid accusations that it was tainted by anti-Semitism. Rabbi Rothschild received a contribution to the repair fund from the Dallas County Citizens' Council in Selma, Alabama. In his cover letter, Council chairman Tom Strong encouraged the rabbi to spend the money however he saw fit: "Please use it to rebuild, as a reward, or to aid in the prosecution of the dastardly criminals who so needlessly and senselessly violated your Sanctuary. We wish there were more we could say and do." Embarrassed to be associated in any way with the segregationist movement, Rothschild asked Mayor Hartsfield to return the check. In doing so, Hartsfield employed the pretence that,

such was "the indefiniteness as to whether the reward will ever be claimed, we . . . are taking pledges only."[46]

It was also in Atlanta that the only arrests in connection with the synagogue attacks were ever made. A suspect was arrested in connection with the Jacksonville bombing but later released. James Lilley, a twenty-nine-year-old bulldozer driver from Bear Grass, North Carolina, was found to have a large supply of dynamite in the car he was driving, a cream and green Pontiac similar to the one seen leaving the Jewish community center shortly before the blast. Although he admitted stealing the explosives from the construction firm where he worked, Lilley never faced formal charges for the attack on the community center. Fingerprints were also found on the satchel in which the dynamite was planted at Temple Beth-El in Birmingham. But the police were unable to identify them. What happened in Atlanta was to prove even more tantalizing.[47]

President Eisenhower was addressing a largely Jewish audience in New York when he learned that the Peachtree Street Temple had been dynamited. Feeling compelled to assert his authority, he demanded an FBI investigation into the bombing. The joint operation between city and federal officials led to the indictment on October 17, 1958, of five men: Wallace Allen, Robert Bowling, George Bright, Luther King Corley, and Kenneth Chester Griffin. All five were alleged to have links with both the National States' Rights Party and the Knights of the White Camellia. In court, Griffin made the astonishing claim that the bombing of the temple was nothing but a publicity stunt performed by Communist Jews "in an effort to discredit and smear the rapid-growing and brave National States' Rights Party." The accusation was one often repeated by extremist elements in the South. In a paid political telecast in Montgomery, John G. Crommelin drew viewers' attention to the fact that no one had actually been injured in any of the attacks. "Did it ever occur to you," he asked, "that it could be an inside job, that it could be planned?" The bombing of black churches in Montgomery was also, he alleged, an attempt by Communist Jews to manufacture public sympathy for African Americans and thereby "effect the civil rights legislation."[48]

The case began on December 1. A mistrial was eventually ruled after the jury failed to reach a unanimous verdict. George Bright was tried a second time, only for the evidence against him to be deemed circumstantial. He and the other four eventually walked free on January 23, 1959.[49]

Despite the failure to convict Bright and his cohorts, the bombing of the Reform Temple was to prove something of a watershed for Atlanta Jews. The

indignation expressed by their fellow Atlantans helped assure the city's Jews of their future safety. This included the final exorcism of the ghost of Leo Frank, which had continued to haunt the older members of the Reform Temple's congregation for almost half a century. Former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activist Julian Bond suggests that the Frank affair had forced Atlanta's Jews, right up to the 1950s, "into a kind of quiescence on other social and political subjects." The dynamiting of the temple also left in ruins the strategy of silence, which for decades had been used to deter hate attacks. "In a way," argues Bond, "it really didn't matter whether they wanted to be sympathetic to me; they had to be sympathetic to me."[50]

Atlanta Jewry did indeed begin to appear more openly sympathetic toward desegregation. The bombing helped embolden the spirit of those who actively supported the civil rights movement, making them less scared to speak out. In the words of Cecil Alexander, "We all took a second look and thought, 'Well, after all, we do have a position in this community that does entitle us to feel secure.'" Rabbi Rothschild had endured constant criticism from certain members of his congregation for the public position he had adopted in support of integration. In the aftermath of the bombing, he found himself able to act with relative impunity. As Rothschild saw it, the attack created a climate in which, "for perhaps the first time in Atlanta, it became possible to speak out."[51]

Although the synagogue attack had instilled in Atlanta Jews a newfound sense of resilience, the same was not true of those other communities that had endured anti-Semitic terrorism. While southern Jews might have been reassured by the scale of the manhunt organized by the authorities, no one had actually been convicted. There was no guarantee that the terrorists would not strike again. Indeed, there was every chance that Jews would become even more obvious targets if they did attempt to publicize their support for racial integration. They therefore continued to exercise extreme caution. The board of Temple Beth-El in Charlotte kept word of the attempted bombing from the press for eleven days. Before the story was made public by the *Charlotte Observer,* five Klansmen were arrested for an alleged plot to dynamite the black Woodland Elementary School in the outlying suburb of Paw Creek. This latter revelation produced a furious reaction from E. A. Levi, rabbi of Charlotte's other synagogue, Temple Israel. According to the rabbi, the failure of Temple Beth-El's members to speak out earlier had encouraged the terrorists to believe they could act without fear of reprisal. As he put it: "I blame those Jews who wanted to keep the matter of the Temple Beth-El

bomb attempt quiet as much as I blame the community." The Nashville bombing similarly failed to embolden local Jews. Rabbi William Silverman was sufficiently shaken by the experience that he carried a gun for the next six months. His public response, however, was a defiant sermon entitled "We Will Not Yield." The board of trustees at Temple Ohabai Shalom responded immediately with a unanimous resolution of support for the rabbi. Others, however, were not so sure. Shortly after the bombing, a petition was submitted to the city's school board, asking it to enforce integration. The petition was signed by twenty political and religious organizations, including the Nashville Ministerial Council. The Jewish Community Council was not among the signatories.[52]

Isolated attacks against Jewish institutions continued throughout the integration crisis. In July 1959, vandals scrawled swastikas on the walls of both synagogues in Columbus, Georgia. Five months later, there followed similar attacks on four temples in Florida. In each instance the authorities denounced the perpetrators and launched an immediate investigation.[53] No matter how unsettling these acts of vandalism were, it was also true that paint spray did less damage than a stick of dynamite. Nonetheless, the fear of future attack would linger. Certainly the virulent anti-Semitism of many segregationists showed no sign of abating. Yet no matter how legitimate Jewish anxieties might be, there were, it seemed, those who found it difficult to sympathize.

BLACK RESPONSES

African Americans reacted to the synagogue bombings with a certain degree of ambivalence. The situation in Atlanta was complicated by the fact that the initial suspect was black. Of all the leads supplied to the police in the twenty-four hours following the bombing, it was the testimony of an attendant at the gas station across the street from the temple which attracted the most attention. According to the attendant, the driver of a 1956 Pontiac hardtop had stopped to ask for directions to the synagogue, just over two hours before the explosion. The driver, who was black, was distinguishable by a scar from his left ear to his chin.

When Police Chief Herbert Jenkins informed reporters that the police were anxious to question the driver in connection with the bomb attack, it created considerable discomfort within the black community. The arrest of five white men only served to reinforce the anger of the city's black newspaper, the *Atlanta Daily World*. It was typical of those really responsible, alleged the paper,

to attempt to frame an African American, and even more typical for the police to fall for the idea that the offender was black. As its editorial writers argued: "It would [be] quite un-Godly for those who would follow the pattern of 'covering' up their tracks, to attempt the old pattern of involving a Negro 'suspect' to give color to a move to detour from the main course, those who would honestly engage in an effort to find out who these midnight marauders are."[54]

Events surrounding the temple bombings created a more general sense of unease among African Americans. Many expressed their sincerest sympathies. NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins responded to the attack on the Nashville Jewish community center by expressing his "horror and outrage at this dastardly act." His address to members of the Memphis NAACP included an appeal that African Americans "rush" financial contributions for the rebuilding of the community center.[55]

Wilkins was not the only one to see in the synagogue attacks incontrovertible evidence that African Americans and Jews must unite against a common oppressor. According to the *Birmingham World,* "If such things are allowed to go unsolved when done against one minority group, the evil-doers become emboldened to move after other unpopular groups." The editors of the *Richmond Afro-American* agreed. "The pro-segregation campaign of, first, vilification and, then, violence against colored persons is about ready to reach out and embrace other victims." Shortly before his arrest in connection with the Atlanta Temple bombing, George Bright had been among a group who picketed the offices of the Southern Regional Council. To Julian Bond, whose sister worked for the council, this meant a realization that Jews and African Americans were the targets of the same terrorist groups. "I was terrified," he insists, "because I thought, you know, the people that don't like Jews don't like us."[56]

It was just such an awareness that led African Americans throughout Atlanta to offer their sympathies. Ministers of the AME church in Atlanta issued a resolution condemning the attack on the city's Reform Temple. "At this juncture," a spokesman for the ministers read aloud to reporters, "when the best of us in this nation are all out for better racial relations and a more wholesome expression and exemplification of a national peace more real and a universal brotherhood, this unfortunate incident has been visited upon us." Rabbi Jacob Rothschild also received a financial donation for repair work from an unexpected source. The black inmates of a local prison asked the chaplain to pass on a collective contribution to the building fund. Deeply

moved, Rothschild wrote back, "Of all the gifts which we have received, this one certainly is one of the most meaningful and heart-warming."[57]

Yet all was not well. The wildly divergent response of the authorities to the bombing of black and Jewish institutions embittered many African Americans. The terrorist attacks against synagogues prompted an outpouring of public sympathy and immediate intervention on the part of local and federal officials. Savage as the synagogue bombings were, the scale of assaults against African Americans was much higher. According to an investigation of six states by the ADL's southern office, fifty-nine black homes and establishments were bombed in 1950–51 alone. The response of the authorities to these outrages was almost always one of indifference.[58]

Faced with such injustice, many African Americans were inevitably infuriated. A resolution adopted by the black Atlanta Baptist Association four days after the attack on the city's Reform Temple commended the efforts of federal and city officials to track down those responsible. At the same time, the Association announced, "We deplore the pronounced silence, lethargy, and inaction of public officials, national and local, in the cases of the bombings of our Negro churches and homes." Responding to a report that a Fulton County grand jury had indicted five men for the Reform Temple bombing, the *Atlanta Daily World* applauded the role performed by FBI investigators. If only they could turn their skills to tracking down those responsible for similar offenses against black establishments. "Many cases of obvious violence which has stirred up terror and drove peaceful citizens from their home towns and counties, have been noted, only to find that 'no federal laws have been violated.' For the want of a federal law violation, many such cases have gone the way of all earth." The paper called on its readers to push their congressman into supporting legislation that would make all bomb attacks, personal assaults, and even "pressure intimidations" federal offenses. A bill to outlaw all acts of terrorism against schools, churches, and public buildings was indeed put before Congress. The *Daily World* enthusiastically endorsed the proposed legislation, but added, "It should also include private homes where race is a motive."[59]

The rigorous response of local and federal government officials to the synagogue bombings stimulated African Americans across the South to urge a reopening of investigations into attacks against their own institutions. "We are glad to see that the FBI has been asked to step in and assist with the probe," observed the *Birmingham World* in the wake of the attempted bombing of Temple Beth-El. "Yet an effort should be made to clear up the other

unsolved bombings." Other requests were not so polite. Some African American leaders sought to embarrass the federal government into taking further action. This they hoped to accomplish by hammering home how hypocritical it was for whites to express outrage at the synagogue attacks, while overlooking similar offenses against blacks. Rev. Uriah J. Fields, pastor of the Bell Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, urged President Eisenhower to expand the FBI investigation into the Atlanta synagogue attack, so as to include earlier bombings of black churches and homes in his own city. Had the president taken action after the Montgomery church bombings, Fields alleged, "there probably would not have been the recent bombing of the Jewish temple in Atlanta."[60]

The most passionate denunciation of the different treatment accorded African Americans and Jews by the authorities came from Annie Moore. In a letter addressed to *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill, Moore compared the rapid reaction of the federal government to the Atlanta Temple bombing with the indifference it had shown following the 1951 murder of her father, Harry T. Moore, Florida state director of the NAACP. Moore was celebrating Christmas with his family in Miami when a bomb exploded inside the house. He and his wife were killed instantly. Moore had recently aroused considerable anger by soliciting public support for some young African Americans charged with raping a seventeen-year-old white housewife in Groveland two years earlier. Despite considerable pressure from various political and religious organizations for a full investigation, President Truman refused to involve the federal government. That the authorities should, by contrast, appear so sympathetic to the Reform congregation in Atlanta enraged Annie Moore. "I remember quite well," she wrote of her parents' murder, "that no large sums of money were offered for information leading toward the apprehension and conviction of the ones responsible for this tragedy; no Governor spoke, no President urged the FBI to investigate to the fullest and report to him; no policemen stood on 24-hour guard over us who remained." As to why there should be such a discrepancy in the reaction of the authorities, Annie asked: "Could this be the reason: the Jew, while hated, is nevertheless White."[61]

Race alone did not determine the divergent responses to the bombing of black and Jewish institutions. Religion also played its part. Had the terrorists targeted any Jewish body other than the synagogues themselves—for instance, the local offices of the ADL—it is unlikely that public outrage would have been quite so intense. Adherence to the teachings of the Old Testament led the more fundamentalist Christians of the Bible belt to believe that Jews

were God's chosen people. As Oscar Cohen of the ADL articulated it, "Respect for Judaism as a religion by important elements in the South has helped contribute to good attitudes." Hence when attacks were made against synagogues, it was interpreted by many Gentiles as an assault on godliness itself. "Where they made a terrible mistake," Atlanta Reform Temple member Cecil Alexander observes of the terrorists, "was, in a part of the country where the ancient Hebrews were revered as the source of Christianity, to bomb a religious building was totally out of order." Of course, the synagogue attacks also caused the South extreme embarrassment, since they reinforced stereotypes of the region as violently reactionary.[62]

Yet despite the expressions of sympathy that poured in after the Atlanta Temple bombing in particular, southern Jews were still plagued by a profound sense of insecurity. White extremists continued to circulate their message, both at mass rallies and through the media, that Jews were responsible for the political crisis that had beset the South. The active involvement of northern Jews in the direct action campaigns of the 1960s would reaffirm the suspicion that the civil rights movement was a Zionist-Communist conspiracy. Whether or not they shared the same liberal sensibilities as their northern coreligionists, southern Jews could not as a community allow themselves to be associated with the civil rights struggle. Determined to safeguard themselves against those who would compromise their personal security, they launched an aggressive counteroffensive. What follows is the story of that bitter struggle.

4 PROTESTING AGAINST THE PROTESTERS

If any good can come of tragedy, it is the determination that it will never happen again or, if it should, that at least one will be prepared for it. In the early twentieth century, American Jews organized a number of agencies designed to combat the resurgent forces of anti-Semitism. Founded in 1906 by a group of wealthy German Jews, the American Jewish Committee sought to provide relief for the thousands of coreligionists who had suffered during the recent Russian pogroms. As anti-Semitism increased at home, the organization further resolved to combat prejudice in every walk of life. Eight years later, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) was established in response to the conviction of Leo Frank, its larger objective being the elimination of anti-Semitic literature within the United States. In 1917, a third Jewish defense agency emerged, the East European–oriented American Jewish Congress.

In the words of Lenora Berson, the three organizations were "originated by Jews to help Jews."[1] Nonetheless, it soon dawned on their leaders that Jews would never be entirely safe, not even in the United States, until every form of prejudice had been eradicated. Jewish activists in particular recognized in the suffering of African Americans a striking parallel to the plight of their own people. This burgeoning support for black civil rights was intensified during the Second World War, as Jews were forced to confront the blatant contradiction of a United States government that fought for the preservation of democracy abroad while tolerating the persecution of racial and religious minorities at home. After the war, the American Jewish Committee therefore began to collaborate with other civil rights organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in an assault on the forces of bigotry and prejudice. The American Jewish Congress also established its Commission for Law and Social Action in 1946. Most conspicuously of all, the ADL busied itself during the decade leading up to the

Brown decision with a series of initiatives on the race issue: directing educational programs, distributing literature, and lobbying Washington for official investigations of racial violence and the passage of effective civil rights legislation.[2]

In the two years following the *Brown* decision, one Jewish organization after another urged immediate compliance by southern state authorities. Having issued an amicus curiae brief in support of the NAACP's position in the case, the ADL was the first to rally public opinion behind the eventual ruling. Such sentiments were swiftly endorsed by other Jewish groups, including those less politically oriented than the ADL or American Jewish Committee. At their forty-third general assembly, held in Los Angeles on February 15, 1955, members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) pledged "to do all within our power to make this decision of the highest court in the land meaningful in our respective communities." By June 1956, both the Synagogue Council of America and the Central Conference of American Rabbis had issued similar resolutions.[3] Jews also contributed considerable funds to those civil rights organizations that spearheaded the assault on racial segregation, including the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).[4]

The Supreme Court ruling had, it seemed, united every element of American Jewry—every element, that is, except southern Jewry. Southern members had, for instance, successfully delayed the ADL from filing an amicus brief in the *Brown* case.[5] No sooner had the ADL publicized its support for school desegregation than B'nai B'rith groups in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Virginia lobbied the organization to reconsider its position.[6]

Southern Jews were in truth thrown into turmoil by the support that the national organizations gave to the Supreme Court decision. Over the next several years, intense internecine squabbling threatened to tear organized Jewry in two. With Miami its only southern base of operations, the American Jewish Congress emerged relatively unscathed. As the two organizations with the most substantial southern membership, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith were the most seriously affected. Recriminations and resignations ruled the day. In the words of journalist Hodding Carter, there was a "very blunt" exchange of opinions.[7]

Southern members often successfully sabotaged efforts to adopt resolutions expressing support for school integration. Such a declaration, drafted by Atlanta rabbi Jacob Rothschild, was defeated by lay members at the south-

ern regional convention of the UAHC in Birmingham, Alabama, in January 1956. Equally unsuccessful was a motion put forward at a convention of the Jewish War Veterans of America, held in Richmond, which encouraged the organization to go "on record in favor of integration of the white and Negro races in public schools." The motion was blocked by a lone delegate, Manuel Schwartz of Birmingham, who later remarked to reporters that he had "won a fight to table the resolution on the ground that such action was not a function of the Jewish War Veterans." Throughout the 1950s in particular, southern members would persevere in this struggle to restrict the civil rights activism of the national defense agencies.[8]

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

As to what produced such panic among southern Jews, the factors appear to have been threefold. The first was fear. As we saw in chapter 3, the rise of massive resistance had been marked by an outbreak of anti-Semitic extremism. In such a volatile situation, it was inevitable that southern Jews sought to avoid any controversy. Their fear was that the actions of the national organizations would identify all Jews with the integrationist movement, thereby inflaming the anti-Semites further. Worse still, it was they, not their coreligionists in the North, who would have to face the consequences. Northern Jews did not risk serious retaliation as a result of their support for civil rights. On the contrary, they commanded much respect. Southern Jews, however, were at serious risk of retaliation. The public association of northern Jews with the civil rights movement compounded their problems, placing their already precarious security under even greater threat, especially in the Deep South.

Shortly after the Supreme Court had issued the second *Brown* ruling, requiring southern authorities to enforce integration "with all deliberate speed," journalist Harry Golden attended a private meeting of the American Jewish Committee in New Orleans. Most of the seats were taken by southerners. What they had to say deeply disturbed Golden. "I listened in amazement to the speeches of these intelligent and substantial Jews. No Jew, they argued, should interest himself in the racial question; that if southern Jews were in any way outspoken against segregation, the white supremacists would turn against them, etc., etc." Tensions between northern and southern Jews persisted throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In an effort to stem the hostilities of their members, the chairmen of all six ADL southern regional boards issued

a joint statement to the effect that cooperation with white moderates could only improve, not undermine, Jewish-Gentile relations. The statement, however, did little to ease fears.[9]

Southern Jews had good reason to be afraid. They had only to point to the fate of those local branches of the ADL and American Jewish Committee already embroiled in the integration issue. Of all the organizations branded subversive by southern politicians and journalists, none were deemed more dangerous than the Jewish defense agencies. Nowhere was this opposition more intense than in Mississippi. Not only the ADL and American Jewish Committee but even the Jewish War Veterans were perceived by the authorities as posing a threat to state security. In February 1956, the *Jackson Daily News* launched an investigation of Americans for Traditional Liberties (ATL), an organization that had publicly attacked segregationist senator James Eastland. The paper claimed to have discovered that the ATL was nothing but a "camouflaged front for the NAACP, which in turn is a front for the American Jewish Congress."[10]

Faced with such paranoid suspicion, the Jewish agencies were forced to cease all desegregationist activities within the state. During the 1950s, the ADL donated copies of its film *The High Wall* to Mississippi's education authorities. Shown in the state's public schools for six years, the film's appeal for greater mutual understanding among all peoples was encapsulated by its closing shot of a group of Americans and Poles walking "arm-in-arm into the setting sun." Distribution of the film provoked little public debate before the passage of the *Brown* decision. Yet in the newly alarmist atmosphere, it soon attracted attention. When the White Citizens' Council seized hold of the film, the ADL found its own propaganda weapon being turned on itself. According to the Citizens' Council, *The High Wall* taught children "to pity their prejudiced parents who did not enjoy the enriching experience of intermingling with persons of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds." The film, and with it all sight of the ADL, was rapidly removed.[11]

State authorities elsewhere made similar efforts to uproot the ADL's educational materials before they had a chance to settle in the fertile soil of children's minds. The distribution of an ADL booklet in the New Orleans school district stirred similar outrage. Despite the fact that both of the central characters in *The Rabbit Brothers* are colored white, there the similarities between them end. Whereas one of the brothers crosses the street every time he finds himself sharing the same sidewalk as a gray or brown rabbit, the other brother tries to find good in all his fellow rabbits. The booklet ends with a question

of its reader: "Which rabbit are you?" Dr. Emmett L. Irwin, chairman of the New Orleans Citizens' Council, was predictably appalled by the booklet. It was, he exclaimed, "obviously intended for the purpose of brainwashing children along the lines of racial integration." Superintendent of Schools James F. Redmond immediately ordered the removal of the booklet, although only two copies, both at the same school, were actually uncovered. Irwin then fired a further salvo at the ADL as it beat its retreat, accusing the organization of being a Communist front. Local ADL director Morton Feigenbaum denied this charge, citing the agency's "outstanding record" against Communism. Accusations were exchanged throughout September 1956, until the two sides settled on a stalemate. Irwin continued to claim that "hundreds of substantiating facts have come into my office, by telephone, by personal delivery, by wire, by letter, by airmail, and by parcel post." The ADL's Label Katz in turn criticized Irwin for making such "un-American attacks."[12]

Since it lacked any natural allies within the southern white community, the ADL was seldom able to offer any resistance against its attackers. By contrast, the organization's opponents were blessed with the force of political power and popular prejudice. Isolated as they were, the ADL's southern branches were easily intimidated. In early July 1958, James J. Kilpatrick, editor of the *Richmond News Leader,* ran a column condemning the local office of the ADL for distributing "pro-integration literature" at an NAACP workshop in Charlottesville. "By deliberately involving itself in the controversy over school segregation," exclaimed the *News Leader,* "this branch of B'nai B'rith is identifying all Jewry with the advocacy of compulsory integration." Most ominous of all was the *News Leader's* demand to know of "some of the South's many esteemed and influential Jews" what possible good they could find "in a Jewish organization that foments hostility toward Jews." Local ADL leaders immediately set up a meeting with the *News Leader's* editor. Apologizing for any harm they caused, the ADL's representatives insisted that they were not, nor ever had been, interested in the integration issue. To this effect, they adopted a resolution stating that, "in accordance with the religious principles of Judaism, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in the Commonwealth of Virginia affirms that its basic philosophies are to combat anti-Semitism and improve interfaith relations." Never again did they seriously involve themselves in the integration issue.[13]

The second cause for the split between northern and southern Jews appears to have been a tactical one. Southern Jews often shared the same resentment at outside interference as the rest of the region's white community. The

South, they insisted, should be left to its own devices in resolving the racial situation. According to Little Rock businessman Noland Blass Sr., "Whatever the actual correct opinion of segregation versus nonsegregation in schools," it was not up to a Jewish official sitting in a New York office to determine how and when integration should take effect. "We tried to get some of these national rabid organizations that were sounding off just to shut up," Blass told an interviewer. "Let us work out our own problem down here. We know what we're up against. We know a whole lots better about it than you do." Since they themselves were not on the firing line, northern liberals could support the *Brown* decision without any serious risk. Even more galling to southern Jews was the way northerners condemned de jure segregation in the South, while conveniently ignoring de facto segregation in their own cities. In an address to the Beth Joseph Men's Club in Denver, southern Jewish newspaper publisher David H. White castigated those northerners who wanted southern Jews "to fight and die for liberal causes, while in the North the same liberals move out when Negroes buy homes in their neighborhood."[14]

Opposition to northern intrusion was also indicative of the fact that some southern Jews were intensely skeptical, if not openly scornful, of the need for immediate integration. Over half the interviewees included in sociologist Alfred Hero's survey of southern Jewry argued that desegregation was proceeding "too fast," admitting that they felt "emotionally ill at ease about integration even when they accepted it as inevitable and in the long run desirable." The ideological differences between northern and southern Jews were clearly expressed in a letter addressed to the American Jewish Committee by the Montgomery, Alabama, Jewish Federation. "The white community in the South is generally opposed to desegregation," read the letter. "The Jewish community in the South is a part of the white community in the South."[15]

Northern Jews endeavored to resolve the conflict with their southern coreligionists before it got out of hand. Isaac Toubin of the American Jewish Congress argued that northern Jews also faced retaliation if they did *not* intervene. Having called upon the larger community for assistance in their own times of need, it was inconceivable that they should now "say to their fellow Americans, 'You help us in those activities, but we can not help you in this activity.'" To do so would subject Jews to the accusation that they were social parasites. An alternative strategy adopted by northern activists was a direct appeal to the self-interests of southern Jews. As they rightly asserted, anti-Semites were exploiting southern fears over desegregation in order to stir up resentment toward Jews. The only way to restore the security of southern

Jews was, therefore, to resolve the existing racial crisis. Despite the indisputable logic of such arguments, southern Jews chose to ignore them. Paradoxically, it was precisely because of the anti-Semitic prejudice already permeating the South that they felt incapable of taking more assertive action on civil rights issues.[16]

At a meeting of the American Jewish Committee's National Commission on Community Interrelations in July 1956, it was agreed that the organization must develop a program "directed toward shoring up the morale of the Jewish community in the South." The American Jewish Committee was not alone in acknowledging the need to assuage disaffected southern members. Realizing that mutiny was rife within the ranks, all three of the Jewish defense agencies dispatched national and southern regional representatives to restore order. There frequently followed what diplomats refer to as a "full and frank exchange of opinions." Al Vorspan recalled one particularly heated discussion with Montgomery's leaders that took place behind the locked door of a downtown hotel room. Having hoped he might convince his audience that the national Jewish organizations were taking the high moral ground in supporting integration, Vorspan was horrified to hear himself and other New York Jews described as being "worse than Adolph Hitler" because of the way they "stirred up anti-Semitism." Nor did the overtures of southern officials succeed in striking a more agreeable note. Birmingham lawyer Mayer Newfield, who served on both the ADL's southeastern regional advisory board and its national commission, met with Montgomery's Jews in 1960 to discuss the local situation. "Upon arrival in Montgomery," as he lamented to Arthur J. Levin of the Atlanta ADL, "I was requested to speak about anything but sit-ins and integration."[17]

Others sent to speak with local Jewish community leaders experienced a similar fate. Little Rock lawyer Ed Dunaway tells of an encounter between businessman Sam Grundfest and a young representative from the ADL's New Orleans office. The ADL official called on Dunaway after the meeting ended. "And he was as shaken up as anybody I've ever seen," alleges the lawyer. "He said that he had gone to Mr. Grundfest, and told him that he was here to help and would be willing to do anything, and Sam said, 'Well, the best thing that you can do is to get out of town as soon as possible, and don't come back.'"[18]

Efforts to contain internal criticism were clearly going to be troublesome. When the dispute spilled out into the open, the national agencies were left struggling to mop up the public relations mess. On January 25, 1956, members of the B'nai B'rith lodge in Selma, Alabama, issued a declaration distributed

to the local press. Citing the depth of Jewish roots in the South, the statement called on organizations like the ADL and the American Jewish Committee to concentrate solely on matters of concern to their own people. The intervention of northern Jews over integration proved purely counterproductive, undermining the genuine but gradual change already under way in the South. "We have seen and contributed," asserted the statement's signatories, "to the continued economic and educational advances obtained by the Negro undreamed of in the past." Such advances, however, occurred within the confines of a segregated society. The defense agencies' support of desegregation was made "in opposition of the great majority of the citizens of the southeastern states, and contrary to the interest of the Jewish people of this section of the United States."[19]

Intervention on the part of ADL officials did nothing to repair the rift. Offering to come and discuss the situation with Selma's Jews, Arthur J. Levin of the ADL's Atlanta office informed businessman Arthur Lewis, "I am afraid that many of our Selma people have lost sight of the true issues involved and are guided completely by 'what will our enemies think?'" Levin also noted that he had received no financial contributions from Selma, something the ADL might have been better able to cope with if it had not needed the money so badly. No good came of Levin's letter. Already frayed, the political fabric holding the two sides together became completely unwound over the next five years. According to an investigation by Benjamin Muse of the Southern Regional Council, by 1961 Arthur Lewis was "one of a group now urging a meeting of the Alabama B'nai B'rith to consider withdrawal from the national organizations."[20]

Nothing ever seems to have come of the plan. Nonetheless, two years later Lewis was among ten of Selma's Jewish leaders who publicly denounced the American Jewish Congress for its position on integration. An entirely unrepresentative organization, the Congress was "composed of so-called 'liberals' residing chiefly in the larger Eastern cities" and it had "no membership as we know of in the South." Relations with Selma's Jews were never entirely repaired. Resentment runs high even today. Richard Rosenberg, former president of Selma's B'nai B'rith lodge and one of the signatories of the original public disclaimer, insists that when he wrote to New York for advice, the reply he received said, "You are expendable." As he puts it, "I haven't had anything to do with them since."[21]

The breach between Selma's Jews and the national defense agencies remained unbridged. Even the most concerted efforts to return southern mem-

bers to the fold ended in failure. In 1956, southern state authorities launched a legal crusade against the NAACP in an effort to suspend its operations. Alabama attempted to bankrupt the local NAACP with the imposition of a $100,000 fine for alleged illegal activity. On October 3, 1957, fourteen national organizations, including the ADL, came to the NAACP's defense, filing a friend of the court brief in the case then pending before the Supreme Court. The response of Alabama Jewry was, in the words of ADL state chairman Herbert Moulitz, "immediate and forceful." A meeting for representatives of the Alabama ADL and national headquarters was convened in Birmingham on October 19. After an intense day of discussion, a resolution was adopted to the effect that "the filing of this brief is a serious mistake." Anxious to appease those angered by the initial lack of consultation, Bernard Nath, chairman of the ADL's national executive committee, invited five Alabama representatives to a meeting of that body in Chicago on October 26–27. At that meeting, a motion clarifying the earlier resolution was unanimously adopted. The resolution read: "Whenever any public action shall be contemplated by the ADL affecting a regional constituency, such action shall be taken only after consultation with such regional constituency; in any public action by the ADL, full consideration shall be given to the welfare and best interest of all Jews throughout the country, including those who reside in the region affected."[22]

The failure of the resolution to alter general ADL policy on integration convinced Alabama Jews that it was little more than a public relations exercise. Resignations from the B'nai B'rith in Alabama continued unabated during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Alongside Selma, the lodges that most severely suffered from cancelled subscriptions were Dothan and Montgomery. According to Joshua Fishman, Montgomery was "plagued by membership resignations and protests." The Chicago agreement appeared increasingly cosmetic, a plaster applied to prevent internal bleeding.[23]

Nor was the problem confined to Alabama. Individual resignations continued by the hundreds across the South. The David Emmanuel Lodge of B'nai B'rith in Waycross, Georgia, was one of several local branches to amputate itself from the national body. Most ominous of all was the way in which the Jews of the Mississippi Delta actually set themselves up in opposition to New York, establishing the independent Southern Jewish Laymen's Association. The purpose of the new organization was "to issue statements to the press, showing the group's concurrence with the stand of the White Citizens' Councils against integration, their dislike of the Supreme Court ruling, and

the feeling that Mississippi is taking the right and proper stand in all these matters."[24]

It was within the American Jewish Committee that southern Jews felt they had made the most successful inroads. In 1958, the committee called an emergency meeting to discuss its involvement in the civil rights movement. With the faces of some three hundred skeptical southern members staring up at him, committee president Irving M. Engel began his address cautiously. The national executive, he insisted, was extremely sensitive to the plight of southern Jews. In an environment where simply to urge compliance with the law was to invite financial or physical retaliation, caution had to remain the keyword. Yet no matter how much he sympathized with the plight of southern Jewry, Engel exclaimed, certain facts remained. "The anti-Semite," he declared, "due to his very nature, will attack the Jew whether he speaks or whether he is silent. . . . *No* American has the right to turn away from these issues. And no Jew *dare* remain indifferent to them. For these are the very values and ideals that have made possible our freedom and our flourishing here in America."[25]

Seizing his opportunity to take the rostrum, Leonel Weil of Montgomery denounced the national executive for its failure to consult fully with the American Jewish Committee's southern membership. The Montgomery Jewish Federation forced the meeting to be called in the first place by shutting off its funds to the American Jewish Committee the previous May in protest of the organization's stance on civil rights. Weil's speech was greeted with a rapturous response. As he later wrote, "The number of people from all over the country who came to us afterwards and expressed sympathy with our point of view was surprising and gratifying." Engel and other members of the national executive agreed that in the future they would seek the opinions of the American Jewish Committee's southern members before immersing themselves in civil rights activity. Weil himself was appointed to serve on the American Jewish Committee's policy administrative board, a position he willingly accepted, "hoping that from within I can accomplish more." Yet whatever concessions southern members were able to squeeze out of the national defense agencies, success was to prove short-lived. The mass resignations by southern members proved counterproductive, since they undermined their control over the policy-making process. With northern members commanding an unassailable majority, continued civil rights activism was inevitable. As the new decade dawned, however, it was no longer the defense agencies whom southern Jews most feared.[26]

"NOBODY ASKED THEM TO COME DOWN HERE"

So long as distance physically separated them from their northern coreligionists, it was comparatively easy for southern Jews to convince others that they were a distinct breed, quite different from northern Jews in their ideological convictions. That situation changed dramatically during the 1960s, as northern Jews joined the direct action campaigns that swept through the South. These campaigns were mainly staged in the Deep South, the assumption of civil rights strategists being that if racial segregation could be broken there, then it would rapidly fall throughout the region. At the same time, the arrival of northern Jewish activists in those very states where southern Jews were most politically vulnerable threatened potentially dangerous consequences. Whether or not local Jews sympathized with the activists, they were determined for the sake of their own security to ensure their rapid return north.

Southern Jews were undoubtedly motivated by self-interest. Their opposition to direct action campaigns must nonetheless be understood as a reflection of the moderate approach of southern liberals to the desegregation issue. As the sociologist Gunnar Myrdal observed, southern liberalism was characterized by its emphasis on "the need for patience and to exalt the cautious approach, the slow change, the organic nature of social growth."[27] This emphasis on gradualism was a pragmatic response on the part of southern liberals to their status as a politically suspect minority. Confronted by the double bind of political conformism and anti-Semitic prejudice, it is therefore not surprising that southern Jews, no matter how supportive of desegregation, should have urged greater caution on the part of northern activists.

In May 1961, black and white activists from the Congress of Racial Equality climbed aboard Greyhound and Trailways buses and rode into the Deep South. They sought to challenge Jim Crow at every terminal facility along their route. According to one ambitious estimate, as many as two-thirds of the white demonstrators involved in the Freedom Rides were Jewish. Alarmed that their presence would identify all Jews with integration, southern Jews moved swiftly to dissociate themselves from the Freedom Riders. When federal judge Frank Johnson issued a court order to keep the Freedom Riders out of Alabama, he was publicly criticized by the American Jewish Congress. Anxious to avert reprisals against Alabama Jewry, Ted Roth, vice president of the B'nai B'rith in Birmingham, immediately informed the local press that the American Jewish Congress "spoke neither for B'nai B'rith nor for the Ameri-

can Jewish Committee in this matter." He noted that there were no American Jewish Congress groups in the South and that the Freedom Riders were a northern organization.[28]

The Birmingham episode established a pattern of events that repeated itself across the South. On June 17, 1964, sixteen rabbis from eight states flew to St. Augustine, Florida, in support of demonstrations led by Martin Luther King. Jailed for joining a restaurant sit-in, the rabbis received a surprise visit from Hoss Manucy, leader of a gang that attempted to sweep St. Augustine's streets clear of civil rights activists. According to Manucy, the president of the local synagogue told him that the rabbis "ain't Jews at all, you're kikes, that's what you are." When the synagogue president himself showed up, he made his position quite clear. Rabbi Al Vorspan recalled the warning he and his colleagues received: "I'm a former state legislator and a prominent lawyer in town. I'm here to tell you so-called rabbis to shut up." The rabbis later reported that they had been deeply "stung that local Jews avoided them."[29]

Some southern Jews evidently hoped that their first meeting with the protesters would also prove to be their last. Others were too afraid to risk any association with them at all. Rabbi Albert Friedlander was among the six hundred demonstrators who attempted to march from Selma to Montgomery on March 7, 1965. Contrary to the allegation that northern activists ignored the issue of racism nearer to home, Friedlander had, in his capacity as Jewish chaplain of Columbia University, been involved in Operation Head Start, a program designed to assist African Americans in the Harlem area who wanted to enroll as undergraduates. When Friedlander telephoned Selma's rabbi to discuss the march, the rabbi said, "Please get off the phone because it may be tapped and I can't afford to be associated with rabble-rousers from the East and I'll lose my position." What Friedlander found particularly upsetting was that he had supposed the rabbi, like him a refugee from Nazi Germany, would be more openly willing to support the civil rights cause.[30]

The conviction that northern protesters would prove nothing but counterproductive received its most intense expression during the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964. Organized by the Congress of Racial Equality, "Freedom Summer," as it came to be known, was conceived as a massive educational and voter registration campaign. Of those whites who volunteered their services, a disproportionate number were Jewish.[31]

Fear for their personal safety prevented even the most liberal of southern Jews from publicly supporting the volunteers. Tensions between the two, however, were not exactly smoothed by the insensitivity some of the demon-

strators showed toward southern Jews. "Some of them," asserts Lil Burnstein of Jackson, "still thought that we beat up a Negro every day, just for kicks, or had chickens in the back yard, or walked bare foot." Among the volunteers themselves, there was some recognition of this arrogance. Kenneth D. Kemper, a Columbia law student who spent two summers in Jackson, stated that few of the volunteers took the time to sit down with local Jews and explain exactly what they were trying to achieve. "To my knowledge I was the only student who was in Jackson who went to Temple every Friday night, who was invited to people's homes every Friday night."[32]

The conflict created by the arrival of the volunteers is illustrated by the experience of Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld. Nowhere was the number of African Americans who enrolled at the "Freedom Schools" larger than in the city of Hattiesburg. There, on July 6, 1964, almost six hundred African Americans, "ranging in age from 8 to 82," began classes in five schools. Of those whites who volunteered their services during the Freedom Summer, a disproportionate number were Jewish. It was the involvement of one of these individuals in particular which would so antagonize Hattiesburg's indigenous Jewish population.[33]

It was almost midday and the five volunteers, having worked up a healthy appetite canvassing the city's African Americans all morning, were walking along the railroad track toward the Morningstar Baptist Church, where lunch was about to be served. There, every weekday, Freedom Summer activists reassembled around the communal tables to exchange ideas and opinions on the morning's experience. Strolling arm in arm, their spirits high, the five companions did not initially realize that they were being followed. When the white GMC truck stopped at a crossing, two men stepped out, one brandishing an iron bar. Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld, spiritual leader of a congregation in Cleveland, Ohio, was the first of the volunteers to be set upon. According to coworker Lawrence Spears, the rabbi "had not remembered what he had been taught in orientation or else had not had any orientation as he did not know how to protect his head and abdomen from the blows." Spears and fellow white student David Owen did not escape either. Unharmed, Janet Crosby and "Margie," the two black women with whom the men had been walking, helped their injured associates struggle to the church, avoiding their assailants' efforts to run them over in the truck. By the time they reached their destination, the rabbi was weak from the loss of blood. All three men were rushed to the city's Methodist Hospital. Owens and Spears were soon treated for their injuries and released. The rabbi, who had sustained a deep cut over

his right eye, as well as lacerations of the head and right arm, was held overnight.[34]

The local Jewish population was not sympathetic. Lelyveld was perceived less as a martyr than as a menace. TV station owner Marvin Reuben was skeptical of any actual achievement by the volunteers, arguing that they should not simply be "marching around for the news cameras, but going into the black homes and preparing them better for integration, which they were not." What stirred the rancor of most of Hattiesburg's Jews, however, was something more profound than a simple dispute over tactics. They questioned the entire purpose of the Freedom Summer project. "I resented them strongly," exclaims shoestore owner Maury Gurwitch. "They came down here. They knew nothing about the South." What really rankled was the involvement of Lelyveld and other rabbis, who made the project appear "like a Jewish protest." This animosity manifested itself in the minimal contact between the two groups. As Lou Ginsberg succinctly states: "We weren't nice to 'em."[35]

While not indifferent to the assault on Rabbi Lelyveld, Hattiesburg's Jews were also of the opinion that his presence was unwanted and that he had, to some extent, brought the injuries upon himself. It was five A.M. when the telephone rang and Lou Ginsberg's husband, Herbert, reached sleepily for the receiver. On the line was a reporter from Cleveland, hoping for a reaction to the incident from a local Jew. Having only just returned from out of town, Herbert had no idea what the reporter was talking about. Although he agreed that the attack had been "terrible," he said that the rabbi "was in the wrong place." More to the point, he asked, "Why are you calling me at five o'clock in the morning?" When Herbert saw the reporter's article, he was outraged to find himself portrayed as a racist who was "not sufficiently appalled" at the assault. Yet even if the reporter had called during the day, the Ginsbergs would not have offered an altogether different response. Opposed to the entire Mississippi Summer project, they would have preferred it if the rabbi and all the other volunteers had never come to Hattiesburg. When pressed on what alternatives were open, Lou Ginsberg responds: "I'm really ashamed to say, I probably would have left it like it was."[36]

Rabbi Lelyveld was all too aware of the way he was regarded by Hattiesburg's Jews. Discharged from the hospital, he decided to return home. Evidently upset by the indifference and even anger of local Jews, he offered one parting observation. "To my own people in the South," he told reporters, "I can only say this. There is only one way to stay here and not be corrupted,

only one way to stay and be faithful to Israel's covenant: that is to stay and stand up for decency and freedom with all the risks involved. If you cannot do that—and it is understandable if you can't—then, for the sake of your souls, leave Mississippi." Lelyveld's assailant, thirty-one-year-old Kilmer Estus Keys of Collins, Mississippi, was fined $500 and received a suspended sentence of ninety days' hard labor. It seemed small recompense. Throughout, the police showed little interest in pursuing the case. Public apathy was such that the decision was not even reported in the local newspaper.[37]

No sooner had Lelyveld left town than there occurred an even more appalling event. On June 21, Freedom Summer activists Mickey Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andy Goodman climbed into a blue Ford station wagon and set out for the tiny town of Longdale to investigate a recent incident in which a black church had been burned and its members beaten by the Klan. "If we're not back by 4:30," Schwerner informed a fellow worker, "start phoning. But we'll be back by 4:00." The hour came and went. Fears for the safety of the three men were immediate. The only lead came from the police in nearby Philadelphia, who claimed to have stopped them for speeding and detained them for six hours of investigation. Two days after the three men disappeared, President Lyndon Johnson ordered two hundred FBI agents to the scene, joined by four hundred sailors from a local naval air station. On August 4, the bodies were found buried in an earthen dam, deteriorated almost beyond recognition.[38]

The murder of the three civil rights workers frightened Mississippi's Jews even further from any open involvement in the integration issue. White media reaction to the death of James Chaney was muted. A black Mississippian, born in Meridian, Chaney was yet another casualty of the civil rights struggle, his murder regrettable but unremarkable. In contrast, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman were the movement's first white martyrs. Moreover, both men happened to be Jewish. As with the assault on Rabbi Lelyveld, there were those Mississippi Jews who argued that the three activists had invited danger through their unwanted interference in other people's affairs. Rabbi Milton Schlager of Meridian had expressly urged Michael Schwerner to leave Mississippi as soon as possible. Now it was too late. "Sure, I felt sorry for those boys," asserted one merchant. "But nobody asked them to come down here and meddle with our way of life." To many other Mississippi Jews, the murders meant the need to adopt an even lower profile than before. "Everybody," affirmed Marvin Reuben, "felt shockwaves from the Philadelphia thing."

Frantic efforts were therefore made to repress the publicity surrounding the deaths of the civil rights workers. Esther Shemper of Hattiesburg summed up the situation: "We were scared to death."[39]

NEW POSSIBILITIES

Given the often legitimate fears of southern Jews, what is surprising is not the resentment of the majority against their northern counterparts but the resilience of an important minority who struggled on in the battle against segregation. In 1957, delegates assembled in New Orleans for what turned out to be the largest general assembly in the twenty-six-year history of the Council of the Jewish Federation of Welfare Funds. That the meeting was swollen to capacity owed to the attendance of some 225 southerners. A resolution adopted by the Council urged all Americans to observe the due process of law, with the insistence that constitutional rights and freedoms "are not divisible, and must be secured equally to all Americans." No specific mention was made of either integration or the *Brown* decision, despite the efforts of Label Katz from the ADL's southeastern regional office to introduce a specific support clause. Mortimer May of Nashville seconded the motion. However, their courageous stance was blocked by other southern delegates who protested the possible harm that could come to them should such a clause be adopted. More positive still was an earlier resolution, issued at the annual convention of B'nai B'rith District Grand Lodge No. 5 held in Richmond in June 1956. Representatives from Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, North Carolina, Maryland, and the District of Columbia voted 79 to 28 in support of the national ADL's stance on integration. This they did with the acknowledgment that "such an adjustment will be difficult for some of us." Evidently, it would be more difficult for some than for others. The South Carolina delegation voted unanimously against the resolution.[40]

Despite the serious setbacks suffered in New Orleans and the entire state of Mississippi, elsewhere the ADL assisted white moderate organizations by supplying them with an abundance of educational materials. In Little Rock, the efforts of the Women's Emergency Committee (WEC) to keep the city's public schools open were assisted by the south-central regional office of the ADL. Acting in an advisory capacity, the ADL also provided pamphlets on all aspects of desegregation, which the WEC in turn distributed to white parents throughout Little Rock. One of those pamphlets included a play produced by the ADL's southern regional office in Atlanta, entitled "Mary Smith

Meets Her People." The play, which was issued to other cities, including Atlanta itself, told the story of a spoiled girl who looks down on everyone. Routinely rude to her family's black maid, she also refuses to invite a Jewish boy to her party because he is of a different religion. One day the girl meets Mr. People, "a mythical character representing the peoples of the world." In answer to Mary's assertion that she has more right to be in the United States than people whose ancestors arrived on the country's shores at a later date, Mr. People conjures up Chief Tamiami. The chief tells Mary that it was the Indians who first settled in America, a fact that makes everyone else, including Mary, a foreigner. Mr. People then summons the spirit of Mary's great-great-great-great-grandfather, who, it transpires, arrived in South Carolina in 1690 but as a white indentured servant. By the end of the play Mary learns "that people coming from countries all over the world have worked together to make America a wonderful place to live."[41]

It was in Atlanta that Jewish organizations made the most conspicuous contribution to civil rights. The threat of closure had hung over Georgia's public schools since the passage of a series of laws by the state legislature in 1956. Three years later, the threat appeared more a probability than a possibility. Governor Ernest Vandiver was empowered to close any public school or university ordered to comply with the Supreme Court ruling. Further legislation was designed to abolish the school taxing power of any municipality obliged to desegregate. Organized opposition to school closure arose in the form of Help Our Public Education, Inc., or HOPE, as it was more familiarly known. The group enjoyed the ardent support of several prominent Jews, including Atlanta rabbi Jacob Rothschild and *Gainesville Times* editor Sylvan Meyer, who had been awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his paper's stand on civil rights. However, it was more than a scattered handful of Jews who joined the struggle to keep the public schools open.[42]

The Jewish Community Council entered the fray with an emphatic public statement: "We view with deep concern any possibility that our public schools may be closed. A reverence for learning has been basic in Jewish tradition, and we believe the continuance and preservation of our public schools is vital to the very survival of our democratic society." In no other city where the public schools were threatened with closure had a Jewish organization adopted so strident a stance. On August 11, 1958, members of the American Jewish Committee in Little Rock convened behind closed doors to discuss the city's school crisis. Unanimously agreeing that "the problem should not be identified in a Jewish context," those present elected to hold fire on the city

authorities. However, they were equally emphatic in turning their guns on the national defense agencies, in particular the ADL, for "spreading distrust and resentment" toward Jewish groups "regardless of their innocence or guilt." Anxiety about anti-Semitic reprisals seriously restrained the actions of the American Jewish Committee. As an unsigned document of October 1958, the month after the city's public schools were closed, made clear: "Fundamentally liberal, apprehension has gripped the leaders and paralyzed group expression and action." Jewish groups in Norfolk, Virginia, similarly concluded that silence was their only means of survival. Writing in the immediate wake of the *Brown* decision, Morton Gaba, executive director of the city's Jewish Community Council, observed that integration had not been "raised at any of the meetings" of local Jewish organizations. The situation remained unchanged four years later, when the schools were closed.[43]

Even in Atlanta, caution remained the keyword. It was only with the strongest reservations that the Jewish Community Council issued its statement in support of keeping the city's public schools open. The local chapter of the American Jewish Committee had resisted public release of the statement, fearing that it would openly identify Jews with the integration issue. Only when a number of Christian organizations had declared their opposition to school closure, and "the tide now seems to be running with us," as area director Charles Wittenstein saw it, did the Committee yield. The struggle, however, was far from over. In February 1960, the Georgia legislature established the General Assembly Committee on Schools. The purpose of the Sibley Commission, as the committee was more commonly called, was to hold hearings in the state's ten congressional districts in order to gauge whether the public sought any change in existing school policies. Representatives from the Jewish Community Council testified before the Sibley Commission on March 23, declaring themselves "in favor of uninterrupted public education." Still anxious not to appear too outspoken, they made no mention of integration itself. Nonetheless, the commissioners were among the witnesses who helped determine the outcome of the Sibley Report, which recommended an end to school closing policies, at the same time encouraging every legal means of minimizing integration.[44]

It was not until August 30, 1961, that token desegregation began in Atlanta's schools. The following May, three teachers from the city's northside were sent to a summer workshop in human relations at Boston University, there to acquire the skills to ease the process of integration in their own classrooms. Both the initiative and the financial support for this exercise were pro-

vided by the local chapter of the American Jewish Committee. The plan had first been proposed in December 1960, at a meeting between American Jewish Committee representatives, Assistant School Superintendent Rual Stephens, and Area Superintendent Ed Cooke Jr. In selecting teachers from the northside, the American Jewish Committee aimed to avoid schools situated near existing borders between black and white residential areas, where tensions over integration would inevitably be most intense. At a later meeting with Dr. John Letson, superintendent of Atlanta's public schools, the American Jewish Committee suggested that the school system itself should assume responsibility for training teachers in the art of human relations.[45]

Despite its misgivings about the Sibley Commission's statement, the American Jewish Committee had maintained an active role in accelerating integration in Atlanta's schools. Public statements were at odds with the American Jewish Committee's preferred tactics of behind-the-scenes negotiation. The American Jewish Committee perceived its role as a secondary one, helping to smooth the process of integration already begun by black civil rights organizations. As Charles Wittenstein described the American Jewish Committee's position: "Another way to differentiate our role from NAACP, CORE, SNCC, or SCLC is to characterize them as the fathers of social change and us as the midwives. When we help to deliver, we are earning our keep as a human relations agency." The American Jewish Committee offered its services to those political and business leaders who sought professional advice on how best to deal with the desegregation crisis. Ivan Allen, then president of the chamber of commerce, made use of materials supplied by local American Jewish Committee chairman David Goldwasser on the economic consequences of integration in Little Rock, in order to convince other businessmen of the positive good that could come of compliance with the Supreme Court decision.[46]

The actions of the American Jewish Committee in Atlanta reveal the largely unrecognized contribution of southern Jews in securing the peaceful integration of the region. Elsewhere in the South, however, the situation was less inspiring. Unwilling to risk potentially violent reprisals, the southern chapters of the organization largely avoided any involvement in the integration issue. Above all, they were driven by a desire for self-preservation, an anxiety not to be led into danger by the recklessness of those who did not understand the South and its ways.

5 JEWISH MERCHANTS: CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Since the late nineteenth century, Jews have played a prominent role in the southern retail trade. Some of the more successful merchants appear to have achieved the American dream. Having started out as poor immigrant peddlers, they eventually established prosperous department stores.[1]

The owners of these stores were obliged to observe existing laws about the separation of the races. Signs establishing the exclusive use of "whites" or "coloreds" were erected over every water fountain and rest room door. African Americans were similarly excluded from any but the most menial employment.

On February 1, 1960, four black freshmen at North Carolina A&T College in Greensboro sat at the lunch counter of the local Woolworth's store and demanded equal service with white customers. Their actions sparked a series of similar direct action campaigns across the South. During the next few years, the department stores in almost every major downtown area were targeted as symbols of racial oppression. African Americans organized themselves in a determined effort to enforce open and equal access, both as customers and as employees. They enforced economic boycotts of the stores, paraded on the streets outside, and sat in protest at the lunch counters inside.[2]

Three cities most affected by the demonstrations were Atlanta, Little Rock, and Birmingham. The story of the desegregation struggle in each has been told before. Only fleeting attention, however, has been given to the fact that many of the department store owners involved in these demonstrations were Jewish. It is the impact of this in particular which I will seek to explore here. The events that occurred in each city suggest a common theme. No matter how sympathetic Jewish merchants might be in principle to the idea of integration, in practice they appeared to be stern opponents. Such were the pressures imposed by the forces of massive resistance that no businessman, be he Jew or Gentile, would have found it easy to take the initiative in desegregating

their facilities. Ultimately they were paralyzed by the conflicting pressures that the black and white communities placed upon them. Anxious to arrive at a settlement that would not alienate either side and therefore adversely affect their businesses, the merchants were unable to offer any clear direction as to how the conflict should be resolved. What follows first is an account of the origins and eventual outcome of that conflict in the three aforementioned cities.[3]

ATLANTA

On February 5, 1960, a small group of students from Atlanta University gathered at a nearby drugstore. Inspired by the sit-ins in Greensboro, they sought to organize demonstrations against segregated facilities across the city. Over the next few weeks, they suffered a series of false starts. Then, on March 9, a full-page advertisement appeared in all three local newspapers. In "An Appeal for Human Rights," the students stated "clearly and unequivocally that we cannot tolerate, in a nation professing democracy and among people professing Christianity, the discriminatory conditions under which the Negro is living today in Atlanta, Georgia."[4]

Mayor William Hartsfield immediately arranged for a meeting with student representatives. Despite his assurances that the chamber of commerce would consider their grievances, these and further discussions did little to resolve tensions. On March 15, two hundred demonstrators sat in at municipal facilities throughout the downtown area of Atlanta. Within the next twenty-four hours, the students announced the establishment of the Committee on an Appeal for Human Rights, under the chairmanship of Lonnie King. A second body, the Student-Adult Liaison Committee, was organized in late May to encourage greater communication between the demonstrators and the larger black and white communities. By this time the students were busily cramming for their end-of-year exams and had little energy to invest in their campaign. No sooner had the summer vacation started, however, than the demonstrations stepped up a gear.

The linchpin of the campaign was Rich's department store. By far the largest and most illustrious retail outlet in Atlanta, Rich's occupied almost an entire block on either side of Forsyth Street. Founded in 1867 by Hungarian immigrant and former peddler Morris Rosenheim, the store was still very much a family concern. It had most recently been managed by Morris's grandson, Richard.[5]

Such was the store's influence that its response to the sit-ins would set the pattern for other retailers in the city. Should Rich's agree to the demands of the protesters, the other stores were almost guaranteed to follow. As Rev. William Holmes Borders, chairman of the Student-Adult Liaison Committee, informed one reporter, "Many smaller merchants . . . and chain stores would be willing to go along with us if Rich's would." To this effect, Eliza Paschall of the Greater Atlanta Council on Human Relations wrote to Rich in December 1960, imploring him to lead by example. As Paschall asserted, "The other stores which have recently closed their eating facilities are willing to open them on a desegregated basis if Rich's will agree to this."[6]

Rich's had first become a target of informal black protest in the late 1950s. Letters of complaint were occasionally received from customers who were annoyed by the inadequate facilities accorded blacks. One such letter was written by Jesse Hill Jr. on March 10, 1958. Hill recounted how a recent visit to the store had been ruined when his young daughter had gone in search of a rest room. The only facilities available to African Americans were situated in the subbasement. Since Hill and his family were at that time on the fourth floor, this created something of a problem. "The store was crowded, and my wife had to hurry my baby to the sub-basement under an obvious strain to my baby and the baby's parents." The issue was taken up in another letter that arrived on Dick Rich's desk the following month. According to its authors, Margaret Young and Jesel Simon, the location of the rest room was very inconvenient: "Before beginning a shopping trip we always have to condition our young ones to 'go to the bathroom because you won't have another chance until we come back home!'" The two women also complained that the rest room was in such close proximity to the snack bar that the smell put them off their food.[7]

The response from Rich was as positive as it was prompt. On June 19, 1958, a new women's rest room was opened on the fifth floor. The measure was typical of Rich's concern for customer relations, regardless of race. As a retailer, Rich had scored a number of significant firsts in improving treatment of African Americans. His was the first major store in Atlanta to remove segregated drinking fountains, the first to extend credit to African Americans, and the first to instruct staff to address black customers as "Mr." and "Mrs."[8]

Rich also endeavored to ensure that his store was a place where African Americans wanted to work as much as to shop. The staff magazine, *Rich Bits*, every year included glowing tributes from black employees to their boss. "I have really enjoyed my twenty years here," enthused Fred White of the fur-

niture refurbishing department, "and I think some of the swellest people in the world are working at Rich's." Zelma Bush of the staff cafeteria concurred wholeheartedly. "It's just like one big happy family." The publication of *Rich Bits* was essentially an exercise in public relations. Black employees were confined to relatively minor positions without any prospect of promotion to the shop floor. Nonetheless, there does appear to have been a genuine respect for "Mr. Dick" among black and white employees alike.[9]

The question remains as to why Rich was more progressive on the race issue than other retailers. Answers are not easy to come by. Rich's papers are singularly lacking in the sort of personal correspondence that might offer an insight into his mental processes. It nonetheless seems clear that Rich was not simply a shrewd businessman, out to corner the African American market. At a possible risk to his personal reputation he had, for instance, been closely identified with controversial initiatives to improve housing and welfare for Atlanta's black community.[10]

Although he was a native southerner, Rich had been exposed to any number of outside influences as a student at the University of Pennsylvania and at Harvard. The fact that he was a Jew also appears to have been a determining factor. At the advice of his grandfather, Rich had as a young man changed his name from its original Rosenheim. Assimilated as he was, Rich remained conscious of his status as a Jew. Although opposed to the demonstrations, he confessed to Martin Luther King Jr. that he understood the need to combat discrimination.

Rich did not have to rely on rhetoric. His record alone was enough to convince older African American leaders that it was unfair to concentrate the sit-in campaign against the store. In an editorial of June 25, 1960, the *Atlanta Daily World* argued that demonstrations were of less effect than "negotiation and the cultivation of mutual goodwill and understanding." At the same time, younger activists were encouraged to demonstrate against Rich's precisely because the store had been so willing to grant concessions in the past. As Cecil Alexander, who helped negotiate the eventual settlement, recalls, Rich's seemed to be the "softer target."[11]

Rich's ethnic identity was equally important in raising expectations. This is made clear by Julian Bond, one of the authors of "An Appeal for Human Rights." As he observes, "We thought he would be more sympathetic because he was Jewish."[12]

The story of the sit-in campaign has been exhaustively documented by other writers. Negotiations with Rich took place on June 24 and August 8. In

each instance they only served to underline the differences between the two sides. Integration of the public schools in Atlanta was at this time still being contested. Rich was unwilling to make any concessions until this emotive situation had been resolved. When student leaders threatened to boycott the store, Rich shouted that he could survive without black business and stormed out of the discussions.[13]

Demonstrations continued throughout the summer. On October 19, the students launched a boycott of eleven stores in the downtown area. That day Martin Luther King, who had reluctantly agreed to join the campaign, was arrested along with thirty-five other demonstrators after they refused to leave Rich's restaurant.[14]

Negotiations between city leaders and representatives from the Student-Adult Liaison Committee led to the announcement on October 23 of a thirty-day truce. Although Rich had refused even to send a representative to the meeting, he agreed not to press charges against the demonstrators arrested at the store. Despite the truce, no agreement could be reached. Rich promised to organize a meeting of the city's merchants, but only after the school crisis had been resolved. In December the two sides were still deadlocked. Although it was the last store to close its lunch counters, Rich's announced that the "continuation of anti-segregation" had forced it to fire a number of black employees.[15]

Finally, almost five months after the boycott had begun, a lasting settlement was reached. Mayor Hartsfield announced the news on March 7, 1961. Both sides in the dispute were to be congratulated "upon a fair and statesmanlike approach to this situation."[16]

LITTLE ROCK

Almost anyone who shopped along Little Rock's Main Street in the early 1960s would have been sure to stop at one of its three premier department stores. Each of these stores was owned by Jews. The largest and longest established was the Gus Blass Company. Founded in 1867 by brothers Louis and Gus Blass, the store approached its centenary still in the hands of the same family. Second in terms of size was Pfeifer's, which opened in 1910. Its president was Sam B. Strauss. Born in Indianapolis, Strauss spent several years in Danville, Illinois, before his marriage to Leo Pfeifer's daughter Eleanor brought him to Little Rock in 1924. Within twelve years, he had assumed control of his father-in-law's company. More specialized and subse-

quently smaller than the other stores was the M. M. Cohn Company. Among its past presidents was one of the Pfeifer family, Harry Jr. The present incumbent was Arthur Phillips.[17]

In their attitude toward African Americans, all three stores adhered strictly to accepted custom. Staff did not extend the same courtesies to black customers as they did to whites. As Irene Samuel recalls, African Americans "were not welcome." Black employees at the stores were similarly consigned to a secondary status, none ever to be seen on the shop floor itself.[18]

The merchants did not necessarily dread the prospect of integration. According to one Jewish couple who knew him, Arthur Phillips was committed to desegregation but was "very cautious." Ozell Sutton, one of the black leaders involved in the negotiations to integrate the stores, insists that "you could count on Arthur Phillips." Caution was also very much the keyword for the management at Blass. As Rabbi Elijah Palnick of Temple B'nai Israel puts it, the store's executives were "looking to do the right thing without getting attacked for doing the right thing." Nonetheless, it was not always pragmatic considerations that caused their unease. In 1958, the American Friends Service Committee established a desegregation project in Little Rock. When the project director met with the store owners, he discovered that they "were swept along by the fearful views of some state leaders on the subject of integration and confused this reform with Communism." Another activist who arrived from out of town considered local Jewish business leaders to be so angered at the involvement of their northern coreligionists in the civil rights movement "that anti-Semitism was prevalent in the Little Rock Jewish community itself."[19]

Of the three department store bosses, the least idealistic was Sam Strauss. Any interest he had in upholding or undermining segregation was connected to how it would affect his business. As described by Arthur Phillips's son Dan, he was "a singularly dedicated businessman, who was trying to make his store as profitable as possible." For Strauss, there was little financial incentive in integrating the facilities at Pfeifer's because it might alienate many of his affluent white customers. Strauss made his position clear during a conversation with Irene Samuel, executive secretary of the Women's Emergency Committee. Samuel had attended a meeting of the American Friends Service Committee on the eve of the sit-ins. Having learned that the demonstrations were scheduled to begin the following week, the committee was concerned about any public relations damage that the city might suffer, especially after its disastrous school crisis. Samuel, who had some acquaintance with Strauss, vol-

unteered to speak with him in an effort to avoid any further calamity. Yet when Strauss was informed of the situation, he responded bluntly, "I'll never allow that in my store." Samuel argued that the entire city would suffer if he refused to take preventative action. This only served to infuriate Strauss. "The problem with you," he exploded, "is you don't understand Southern tradition." To this, Samuel, a lifelong resident of Little Rock, replied, "What do you know about it? You came from Illinois."[20]

The sit-ins began on March 10, 1960. That day, fifty students from Philander Smith walked into the downtown Woolworth's store and surrounded its segregated lunch counter. When store officials sought to close the counter, five students who had succeeded in finding seats refused to move. A quick call to the police led to the first arrests of the campaign.[21]

Demonstrations continued for six weeks. Although the M. M. Cohn Company was able to avoid confrontation, the other Jewish department stores suffered considerable interruption. At no time, however, did the frustrations felt by the students assume any anti-Semitic overtones. On April 13, five students were arrested during a sit-in at the tearoom in Blass's. Another four arrests were made at Pfeifer's. Three days later, the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) tried to enforce an economic boycott of both stores. Twenty black protesters established picket lines outside the front entrances. In the days that followed, four or five pickets could be seen standing dutifully outside eight downtown stores. It was possibly at this point that Sam Strauss, unable to control his anger at the constant interruption, ordered that all the seats at Pfeifer's lunch counter be removed.[22]

Despite the determination of those involved, the demonstrations soon lost momentum. Customers both black and white continued to cross the picket lines. According to Dan Phillips, the boycott of the *Arkansas Gazette* orchestrated by the Citizens' Council had a much more damaging impact than the NAACP campaign, since the paper was a crucial source of advertising to all the department stores. Of the black protests, he says, "I don't think there was a boycott." The punitive measures taken by the courts against the demonstrators also acted as a powerful deterrent. An example was made of all nine of the students arrested on April 13. Those who had refused to leave the lunch counter at Pfeifer's were fined $500 and sentenced to sixty days in jail. Harsher still were the judgments against James Lupper and Thomas Robinson, students involved in the sit-in at Blass's. Both were ordered to pay $1,000 and serve seven months in prison. News of the decisions had a sufficiently demoralizing effect on other activists that the demonstrations ground to a halt.[23]

The campaign was resuscitated in October 1962. Attempts had failed in September to convince the city board and the chamber of commerce of the need to establish a biracial negotiating committee. This in turn had induced Ozell Sutton, director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, to seek the organizational assistance of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) headquarters in Atlanta. The arrival in late September of SNCC activist Bill Hansen set events in motion. When further talks with the chamber of commerce proved fruitless, the call was given for demonstrations to recommence. Determined not to be drawn into any prolonged conflict, the chamber of commerce agreed to establish a downtown negotiating committee. The man appointed chairman was Jim Pennick. By late December 1962, Pennick had succeeded in securing a settlement. As the new year dawned, the downtown stores agreed to open their doors on a desegregated basis. Less frequent and less forceful than in other cities, the demonstrations had been resolved with equally less fuss.

BIRMINGHAM

The scenes of brutality sent shockwaves throughout the country. In early May 1963, images of white police officers assaulting black demonstrators in Birmingham abounded in every newspaper and nightly television bulletin across America. The violent scenes enacted on the streets of Birmingham marked the turning point to protests that had begun a month earlier. On April 3, a small band of black students launched a sit-in campaign at four downtown stores. Their actions signaled the start of an organized offensive by Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) against segregation in Birmingham. The specific aims of the demonstrations were severalfold. Of specific concern was the effort to force downtown merchants to desegregate their facilities and adopt fair hiring practices.[24]

Although it was the arrival of Martin Luther King that attracted national media attention, local activists organized the Birmingham campaign. In early January 1961, a band of students from Miles College, a black liberal arts establishment, had organized a protest body known as the Anti-Injustice Committee. Their objective was the immediate integration of all stores in the downtown business district. Over the course of several weeks there ensued a series of intense discussions between the students and representatives from the chamber of commerce. When these negotiations proved inconclusive, the

committee wrote to the presidents of the largest retail stores in Birmingham, requesting that they desegregate their facilities. Between March 6 and 15, representatives from both sides met to discuss a possible solution. It soon became apparent, however, that the negotiations had reached an impasse. The merchants refused to meet the demands of the students unless they had the blessing of city officials. These officials insisted that the problem must be resolved by the merchants. Infuriated at the failure of either group to take the initiative, the Anti-Injustice Committee on March 15 announced the start of a "selective buying campaign" against the stores. Its forces were further strengthened by the support of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), a local affiliate of the SCLC.[25]

Of the six principal stores targeted by the boycotters, three were identified with Jews. The largest of these, and indeed of any store in the state of Alabama, was owned by Louis Pizitz. Founded by Louis's Russian immigrant father, Isadore, in 1898, the store served as the flagship for an expanding retail empire that eventually encompassed thirteen outlets. Less distinguished was its record in dealing with black customers. According to local businessman Mervyn Sterne, "They had bargain basements for Negroes in which they sold them shoddy goods in very unattractive, ill-kept quarters, and not too proper to them." Threatened by the establishment of several discount stores that undercut its prices, Pizitz's had experimented by offering better quality goods to blacks. The management was surprised to discover that African Americans "would buy quality goods . . . and had the money to pay for it."[26]

Smaller than Pizitz's but similarly prestigious was the women's clothing shop Parisian. The store had been purchased by Carl Hess and William Holiner in 1920. By the time of the boycott, the presidency of the store had passed to Hess's son, Emil. Older than either of these two firms was Loveman's. Established in 1887, the store had actually severed its ties with the families of the original founders. Despite this, it was still widely recognized by both blacks and whites as a Jewish establishment.[27]

The students were initially encouraged by the response they received from both Hess and Pizitz. Hess in particular had pushed the more sympathetic merchants into negotiating a settlement before the boycott began. "The Jewish merchants were more sympathetic than the white merchants," affirms student leader Frank Dukes. "They knew what we were trying to do."[28]

Tempers rose, however, as the boycott bore on. When the merchants learned that Martin Luther King intended to launch a direct action campaign against them, they were enraged. Business leaders in Birmingham had hoped

that the mayoral election scheduled for March 5 would help resolve the boycott. Eugene "Bull" Connor, the public safety commissioner whose repressive regime had stymied all progress on the race issue, was being challenged by the more moderate candidates Albert Boutwell and Tom King. Pizitz and Hess pinned their hopes on the overthrow of Connor. When the merchants had initially tried to meet demonstrators' demands by removing their segregated signs, Connor had threatened to proclaim their buildings fire hazards and have them shut down. The signs had swiftly been restored.[29]

The arrival of Reverend King, the merchants feared, would only play into Connor's hands by increasing tensions within the city. At one meeting there followed an angry exchange between Pizitz and Fred Shuttlesworth, leader of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Relations. Pizitz stared at Shuttlesworth as the civil rights activist informed him, "You'll be out of business all over Alabama."[30]

On April 2, 1963, Albert Brownwell defeated Connor by eight thousand votes. The following morning, a small band of black demonstrators were arrested in the downtown area. After a hesitant start, the campaign swiftly gathered momentum. Connor, who retained his position as public safety commissioner, had shown unusual restraint in his treatment of the protesters. The employment of black schoolchildren in the demonstrations nonetheless snapped his resolve, provoking brutal retaliation. Scenes of peaceful demonstrators being savaged by snarling police dogs and swept across the street by high-powered fire hoses were aired on national television. An embarrassed Kennedy administration pressured local civic leaders into seeking an immediate settlement. There followed a furious series of negotiations. On May 7, it was announced that an agreement had been reached between the merchants and SCLC leaders. In return for an end to civic disobedience and the economic boycott, the demonstrators secured a deal for the establishment of a biracial committee to discuss black grievances, the desegregation of in-store eating facilities, and the hiring of black employees. After more than two years, the downtown business district of Birmingham began to return to normal.[31]

NO PLACE TO HIDE

With the exception of Sam Strauss in Little Rock, none of the Jewish merchants immersed in the desegregation struggle were inherently hostile to change. On the contrary, many had earned a reputation for moderation. Richard Rich had distinguished himself through his philanthropic en-

deavors on behalf of the black community. Emil Hess had actively encouraged Birmingham merchants to accept the demands made by the Anti-Injustice Committee. Although Sam Strauss defiantly removed the lunch counters from his store, such behavior paled in comparison with the responses of several non-Jewish merchants. In Birmingham, Roper Dial of Sears, Roebuck and L. Jameson of J. J. Newberry's fired all their black employees and refused to negotiate. Jameson even posed for photographers in a Klan outfit.[32]

Despite their essential sympathies for the demonstrators, such was the reluctance of Jewish merchants to actually meet their demands that it often spilled over into outright hostility. Such actions have earned the merchants an unenviable reputation among historians. Michael Nichols has described the Jewish store owners in Birmingham as "spineless." Equally unsavory are the accusations made against Richard Rich. Typical is the assessment of David Garrow, who observes of the initial negotiations with student leaders: "Rich was a reputed liberal, but he offered no concessions and demanded that the protests be halted." This is undoubtedly true. Equally there is much to be said of the accusations that the demonstrators leveled against the department store president. When negotiations failed in late November, the students alleged that Rich was simply trying to avoid any interruption to the million dollar Thanksgiving sale that the store had heavily advertised.[33]

History accords the greatest respect for those who stand up in support of what they know to be right, regardless of the risks. This the merchants evidently failed to do. As to why conciliation should have slid into confrontation, there are two answers. The first inevitably has to do with finance. As Richard Pizitz candidly admits, the primary issue that he and his father faced was not how to fulfill what their consciences told them was a rightful obligation toward African Americans but rather, "How do you stop the boycott? How do you preserve the business?"

Jewish businessmen had led the forces of racial moderation in Birmingham since the end of World War II. In April 1951, investment company owner Mervyn Sterne had helped establish the Interracial Committee of the Coordinating Council of Social Forces. Comprising twenty-five black and twenty-five white leaders, the organization operated within the existing Jim Crow laws to "undertake improvement of interracial understanding and relations in Jefferson County." The committee targeted five areas in which it sought to improve facilities for African Americans. These were hospitals, housing, recreation, transportation, and daycare. It also campaigned for the introduction of black police officers. Sterne chaired the hospital subcommittee. After five years,

however, the increasingly repressive political climate in Alabama forced the Interracial Committee into extinction.[34]

Mervyn Sterne was no radical. The idea of racial integration revolted him. His concern was that the worsening racial crisis in Birmingham would bring economic ruin to the city. He believed that potential investors would be scared away by the persistent political turbulence. When city officials decided to close all public recreational facilities in 1961 rather than open them on a desegregated basis, Sterne was alarmed at the potential economic fallout. As he later informed Alabama congressman George Huddleston Jr., "It is highly probable that several thousand people in Birmingham are out of work or on short time because contracts that Birmingham industries had hoped to get and had reason to believe they were best qualified to get have gone elsewhere."[35]

Such fears were shared by William P. Engel. Engel had amassed a sizable fortune through his real estate and insurance companies. Although more ideologically committed to integration than Sterne, he too feared the economic misfortunes that would beset the city should it prove stubbornly resistant to change. As he informed an audience at the Jewish Community Center in January 1962, "We have already had more nationwide unfavorable publicity because of our mishandling of today's problems than any of our large sister cities of the South. And this is adversely affecting the daily lives of each and every one of us."[36]

While Sterne and Engel both spoke out in support of desegregation long before the demonstrations in Birmingham, Emil Hess and Louis Pizitz remained conspicuously silent. Ideological differences do not explain this. Instead, the answer lies in the altogether more precarious position that the department store owners held in the local economy. As men who worked in investment and insurance, Sterne and Engel were able to act with relatively little fear of financial recrimination. The downtown shopping area became a battlefield between the local authorities and black demonstrators. By contrast, a boycott of an insurance company was unlikely to capture the public imagination. Both Sterne and Engel admitted to having been threatened by hard-line segregationists. Unlike the department store owners, however, they had no serious expectation of being caught in the middle of an ideological conflict.[37]

As for the department store owners, they had every reason to be worried. At the height of the boycott, Birmingham merchants suffered a 40 percent drop in sales. The situation was equally dire in Atlanta. In April 1961, two

months before the boycott began, Rich's had announced its largest annual net sales. Confident as the company was that it could parry the blows of the boycott, its profits took a considerable punching. Net sales over the next twelve months fell by over $7 million, a decline of 8.25 percent.[38]

Wounded as they were by the black boycott, the merchants were equally aware that the white community exerted even greater economic muscle. Should they openly accede to demonstrators' demands, they could expect to suffer even greater financial injury. Fear of the threat posed by the Citizens' Council, for instance, did much to determine the attitude of the department store owners in Little Rock toward the sit-ins. In December 1957, the Citizens' Council in Little Rock had organized a boycott of all retailers who advertised in the pages of the integrationist *Arkansas Gazette*. At the time the stores would have been punished only for their guilt by association with the civil rights movement. Should they choose to desegregate their facilities, they would become the direct targets of an attack by the Council.[39]

Richard Rich could have told the merchants in Little Rock much about economic victimization. According to his board director, Ivan Allen, a "great number" of disaffected white customers cancelled their accounts at Rich's. Equally disturbing was the appearance of a group of militant segregationists known as Georgians Unwilling to Surrender (GUTS), who already threatened to launch counterdemonstrations if Rich's made any concessions to the boycotters. Either way, it seemed, the store would lose a significant percentage of customers.[40]

It took another twelve months before the store was back to business as usual. A new record in net sales was set in the fiscal year ending February 2, 1963. To some extent this showed that Atlantans had little stomach for the counterdemonstrations organized by GUTS. Yet it also had much to do with the company's establishment of a new out-of-town store, Rich's Cobb County.

It would be misleading to suggest that Jewish merchants alone agonized over the economic repercussions of integration. Every businessman confronted with economic boycott had to calculate the greater financial risk he would run by his decision whether or not to desegregate his store. This, however, should not disguise the fact that Jewish store owners were especially vulnerable. An atmosphere of extreme intimidation often hung over their negotiations with the demonstrators, one in which they as Jews were singled out for scorn and abuse. Ultimately, it was not only their livelihoods but their very lives that seemed at stake.

TABLE 2: RICH'S, INC., ANNUAL NET SALES, 1961–1963

Fiscal Year	*Net Sales*	*Increase/Decrease*
Ending January 28, 1961	$92,726,000	
Ending February 3, 1962	$85,099,663	− $7,626,337
Ending February 2, 1963	$95,439,000	+$10,339,337

Source: Rich's, Inc., annual report, fiscal years ended January 28, 1961; February 3, 1962; February 2, 1963, series 3, box 46, folder 14, Richard H. Rich Papers; *Rich's News Bits,* April 1961, series 3, box 47, folder 13, Rich Papers.

Rich's board of directors expressed their support for "Mr. Dick" by electing him as their chairman the following month. Yet there was reason for him to remain apprehensive.

When terrorists bombed the Reform Temple in October 1958, Rich was overwhelmed by the expressions of sympathy he received from strangers. As he told his rabbi, Jacob Rothschild, "Everyone I met on planes and trains, from other cities, has had a reaction of terrible revulsion against this dastardly act." For a time Rich had been reassured of his personal safety as a Jew. No sooner did anti-Semitism appear to be in remission, however, than the desegregation of the stores threatened to spark a new spread of the disease. Formal desegregation of the stores was scheduled for September 27. Less than a month earlier, on August 31, token integration of Atlanta's public schools was also due to begin. As ever, anti-Semites sought to exploit tensions within the community. The National States' Rights Party (NSRP) circulated a "Special Georgia Edition" of the *Thunderbolt* throughout Atlanta. Robert Bowling, one of the men acquitted of bombing the Reform Temple, openly distributed copies of the *White American,* another virulently anti-Semitic journal, on the streets of the city. Such was the perceived threat that the police department contacted American Jewish Committee regional director Charles Wittenstein and urged him "to advise all Jewish institutional buildings in this city to take precautions beginning the last week in August."[41]

Dick Rich might well have worried that the integration of his store would only give anti-Semites more ammunition. As Wittenstein acknowledges, Atlanta Jews feared that any concession to the demonstrators "would stimulate the issue of anti-Semitism."[42]

Such thoughts similarly preyed upon the minds of the Jewish merchants in Little Rock. According to Dan Phillips, they decided to select someone other than a department store owner to chair the Downtown Negotiating Com-

mittee. "That was conscious," he states of the eventual appointment of Jim Pennick, "because it didn't seem smart to have someone Jewish on that." Rabbi Elijah Palnick, who counted all of the Jewish retailers among his congregation, agrees that the election of a Gentile eased eventual acceptance of integration among the larger white community. A common assumption among many segregationists, he explains, was that African Americans lacked the intellect to lead a successful struggle for their own equality. How then to account for the advances made by the civil rights movement? As Palnick states, "Their line was that that was being masterminded by Jews, and that it was a Jewish conspiracy to mongrelize the South, etc. And so you really had to be very careful in how you did things."[43]

Anti-Semitism had exerted a pernicious influence over the city of Birmingham ever since the Supreme Court decision was passed.[44] The offices of the extremist National States' Rights Party were located on Bessemer Road. From this address the organization launched a propaganda offensive against the Jewish people, accusing them of secretly masterminding the mongrelization of the races.

One particular target was the annual Brotherhood Week sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In October 1957, the NSRP ran a headline in its newsletter that read: "NCCJ, the Trojan Horse in Birmingham." The article warned readers to be on their guard against the organization. "Bear in mind," it asserted, "that the NAACP is the War Department of the race mixing forces, the NCCJ acts as the State Department or Educational Department that works through Churches, Labor Groups, Civic organizations, and any other group it can infiltrate, its job is to condition your mind for acceptance of integration." Anyone publicly identified with the NCCJ or the various Jewish defense agencies received threatening calls. Dozens of meetings were held to discuss the increasing danger in which the Jewish community found itself. Despite the eventual involvement of the police, however, the calls kept coming.[45]

The local chapter of the NCCJ was forced onto the defensive. To ensure that the steady flow of contributions upon which its survival depended did not dry up, the Alabama office issued a statement to the effect that it was "not now, nor has it ever been, since its organization some thirty years ago, involved in school desegregation problems, or in the question of integration generally. This policy will not be altered in the future." When the Birmingham Park and Recreation Board allowed the Ku Klux Klan to hold an interstate rally at Easy Lake Park, the NCCJ was alarmed at what it perceived as the potential threat

to peace, progress, and security. After much anxious consultation, however, it decided to remain silent.[46]

Above all, it was the bomb attack against Temple Beth-El that most intimated Birmingham Jews. The dynamite planted outside the Conservative synagogue on April 28, 1958, failed to detonate. The only explosion was an outburst of anger from local authorities, who immediately launched a large-scale search for the culprits. Much as this reassured the Jewish community, there were still ominous signs that the message of the National States' Rights Party had started to win an audience.[47]

Should the merchants agree to desegregate their lunch counters, it would only substantiate the accusations of the anti-Semites. The National States' Rights Party had as early as 1956 attempted to organize a boycott against any business leaders associated with the integrationist movement. By 1963 the stakes seemed much higher. The NSRP deluged the downtown area with mimeographed hate sheets. Despite the fact that other merchants had agreed to the settlement, it was the Jews who were accused of having given in willingly. One hate sheet urged residents "to avoid buying from race-mixing Jewish-owned stores and to hire White workers only in their businesses and homes."[48]

Despite their extreme caution, the fears of the department store owners ultimately proved unjustified. The desegregation of their businesses was greeted not so much by a storm of protest as by a light shower. Events in Little Rock offer an excellent example. Such was the concern of the Downtown Negotiating Committee to avoid publicity that it was not until January 27, almost four weeks after the agreed date for desegregation, that the *Arkansas Gazette* announced the news. Under the banner headline "Businesses Desegregate; Quiet Start," the paper reported that over the previous month, integration of local restaurants, lunch counters, and rest rooms had proceeded apace. Opposition had been immediate. On January 12, a small group dressed in workers' garb had appeared outside the main entrance of the Gus Blass Company. Laying siege to the store, they held aloft handpainted signs with anti-Semitic slogans such as "These Jews are sneaking integration on white people." According to Sam Strauss and Arthur Phillips, there was a consensus among hard-line segregationists that Jews were guilty of "giving in" to black demands. During the weeks that followed, however, the protests rapidly dwindled. At one point, a lone picket could be seen parading around the downtown area, and then only on certain days. The Gus Blass Company disclosed the loss of only ten charge accounts, "only one who spent

any money and we'll get her back as soon as we advertise an $85 dress for $35."[49]

Not until July did the Capital Citizens' Council declare a second wave of attack. Council president Amos Guthridge informed the press that thirty thousand cards urging an immediate boycott of integrated retail outlets had been distributed in and around Little Rock. As each card stated: "You and other White People can stop INTEGRATION in its tracks by using your Economic Strength—BOYCOTT all INTEGRATED businesses." Yet it was not to be. Never having burned very brightly, opposition soon fizzled out altogether. By autumn 1963, integration of the downtown department stores was an accepted fact.[50]

Events in Birmingham were more unsettling. Even there, however, it was not enough to give the merchants second thoughts. On the evening before the stores were scheduled to reopen on an integrated basis, vandals smashed windows at Parisian. A glazier had to be called out in the middle of the night to effect emergency repairs and present an image of everyday normality. This, however, was the only serious trouble experienced by the merchants. Richard Pizitz asserts that he and his father had been especially apprehensive about the introduction of black sales clerks some months after the initial settlement had been reached. However, the promotion of two elevator operators, Mollie Daniel and Adoris Hicks, passed almost entirely without incident. The most that the Pizitzes had to worry about was the resignation of one white employee.[51]

BLACK-JEWISH TENSIONS

The demonstrations in each city possessed a similar potential for conflict between the black and Jewish communities. Tensions undoubtedly arose. African Americans resented the recalcitrance of the merchants. Jews thought it unfair to implicate a vulnerable minority group such as themselves in the integration struggle. Although relations between the two peoples suffered some slight dislocation, there was no lasting injury.

Sympathetic as many Jews were to the aims of black activists, they were less enthusiastic about their methods. Throughout these tense months, the Jewish community in each city anxiously awaited the outcome of the demonstrations. Although it was only the merchants who were in the immediate line of fire, the anti-Semites undoubtedly had all Jews in their targets. Conscious that their own fate rested on the form of any eventual agreement, the Jewish com-

munity therefore encouraged the department store owners to exercise extreme caution. At the same time, there smoldered an increasing resentment toward the demonstrators whose persistent pressure jeopardized the security of all Jews.

Shortly after the decision to desegregate had been announced, Dick Rich received a letter from the leader of his congregation, Rabbi Jacob Rothschild. "I want to add my voice," exclaimed Rothschild, "to that of the many citizens of Atlanta who rejoiced in the action which you and Rich's have taken in settling the sit-in dispute."[52] An ardent advocate of civil rights, Rothschild had in truth grown increasingly frustrated at Rich's failure to offer more effective leadership. In the larger Jewish community in Atlanta there was nonetheless much sympathy for the situation in which the department store president found himself. Cecil Alexander, who chaired the negotiations of November 1960, argues that Rich had always shown goodwill toward African Americans. Nonetheless, he also had obligations to his shareholders. Of the decision to concentrate the sit-in campaign against the store, Alexander therefore reflects, "I thought it was unfair." In the event, the Jewish community considered Rich to have done his best to defuse the tensions between the black and white communities. According to local hotelier Marvin Goldstein, Rich was "a fine community-involved person. He gave in, I think, as quickly as he felt he could without losing face."[53]

Similar sentiments were expressed by Birmingham Jews. Many resented the arrival of Martin Luther King in the city, believing that the newly elected mayor, Albert Boutwell, must be allowed time to effect a quieter agreement between the businessmen and the boycotters. As Mervyn Sterne lamented in a letter to one of his friends, "Our difficulties have been greatly multiplied by the activities of outsiders." It was, he insisted to another associate, "desirable to cut the ground from under King and Shuttlesworth." Looking back on the demonstrations years later, Sterne's wife, Dorah, had lost none of her annoyance at the intervention of the SCLC. "The movement under Martin Luther King," she informed one interviewer, "moved into Birmingham just at the time we were making some progress politically."[54]

The eventual outcome of the demonstrations in the downtown area was equally of concern to some of the smaller Jewish merchants in the city. Should the department store owners agree to desegregate their facilities, then other retail outlets would have to follow suit. Since the owners of these establishments had far less capital, they feared that they would be unable to withstand the pressures placed on them by irate white customers. As Harold Blach, the

proprietor of a specialty clothing store, suggests: "We could have driven away many of the white customers who resisted what was going on if we accepted the demands of the protesters." Others were simply opposed to the idea of integration. Arthur Phillips of the Burger-Phillips store was reluctant to see the department store owners grant any concession to the demonstrators. Such was indeed true of the older generation of Birmingham Jews in general. According to Harold Blach, Arthur Phillips "had led almost a full lifetime in a segregated environment. He liked the environment that he lived in and at sixty-five to seventy years of age, not many people like change."[55]

Anxious as the Jewish community was to urge caution, the demonstrators were no less determined to extract immediate concessions. The inherent tension between the two nonetheless never ignited into open conflict. Despite the pressures that they faced on all fronts, there was one force that the merchants never had to contend with: black anti-Semitism. As already observed, the demonstrators in Atlanta had anticipated that Rich would take the initiative to integrate in part because he was Jewish. His failure to do so therefore might be expected to have aroused a certain sense of betrayal. As Charles Wittenstein of the American Jewish Committee observes, there would be those who would mutter that "the damn Jew ought to know better." There is, however, no evidence to suggest that this was the case. Despite their resolve to desegregate the stores, the demonstrators were perhaps not entirely unsympathetic toward Rich. According to Julian Bond, the department store president repeatedly communicated his fear that a "large cadre of anti-Semites and racists would descend on him" if he were to grant any immediate concessions.[56]

The demonstrators in Birmingham similarly resisted any temptation to turn a political campaign against the department stores into a personal attack on the people who managed them. As in Atlanta, the ethnic identity of the merchants was never a major issue.

In September 1964, over a year after a settlement had been reached, Loveman's department store continued to stall over the employment of black sales clerks. Although its management had long since changed hands, Loveman's was still associated with its original Jewish founders. According to an official from the Anti-Defamation League, it was difficult to assess what implication, if any, this had for the pickets who stood in protest outside the store. Even if the protesters should succeed in altering employment policy at Loveman's, wrote the official, "it probably wouldn't alleviate any of the anti-Jewish feeling of the Negroes. There really isn't too much in that city."[57]

As in Atlanta, the demonstrators remained sensitive to the plight of Jewish

merchants. Although determined to enforce desegregation of the department stores, they were aware of the competing pressures being placed on the merchants by "Bull" Connor in particular. "We knew that they were scared," affirms student leader Frank Dukes. "It was just too dangerous for them to get involved." Edward Gardner of the ACMHR agrees. "The Jews' hands were tied," he observes. "They had to walk a tightrope."[58]

ABOVE THE PARAPET

Throughout this chapter it has been suggested that the one characteristic which best defines the response of Jewish merchants to desegregation was fear: fear of personal, political, and commercial repercussions. Ideology did not dictate their actions as much as social and professional status. There is, however, a problem in seeking to present the selective stories of merchants in only three cities as a universal model of behavior. The very essence of humanity is our individual identity. People behave in such a bewildering variety of ways as to resist systematic analysis. Jewish merchants are no exception.

Although the stories of Atlanta, Birmingham, and Little Rock reveal general truths about southern Jewish businessmen, there were some notable exceptions. Richard Rich was not the only Jewish businessman in Atlanta to be confronted with desegregation. In 1963, two years after the integration of his store, civil rights activists turned their attentions to establishments that had still not opened their doors on an equal basis. The actions of two local businessmen, Marvin Goldstein and Charlie Leb, underlines the fragmented response of southern Jews in general to the desegregation crisis. Unlike the merchants mentioned earlier, neither man allowed pragmatism to outweigh principle. At the same time, they approached integration from opposite extremes of the ideological spectrum. Goldstein earnestly supported civil rights, whereas Leb violently resisted change.

Between 1950 and 1960, the income that Atlanta received from the convention business rose from $16.6 million to $30 million. Yet fear spread in official circles that bad publicity over the persistence of segregation in public accommodations would lead to a loss of revenue. In May 1963, the chamber of commerce issued a "policy declaration" urging all businesses to desegregate. Eighteen hotels and restaurants agreed to integrate. Within two months, most had abandoned the idea. An investigation by the Atlanta Council revealed that financial and physical pressure was being placed on those businessmen

who had integrated their establishments by an organization called the People's Association for Selective Shopping (PASS). Under the leadership of restaurateur Lester Maddox, PASS instituted a boycott of all integrated businesses. Its pickets were to be seen parading daily on the streets of downtown Atlanta. Such was the success of the boycott that by August only six restaurants and a solitary hotel were still integrated.[59]

The one hotel that had successfully resisted the boycott was the Best Western American. Its owner was Dr. Marvin Goldstein. A member of Conservative Congregation Ahavath Achim, Goldstein had been born in Atlanta in 1917. Having graduated from the dental school at Emory University in 1938, his studies then took him to the University of Michigan and Columbia University. During World War II, he served overseas with a bombardment group, rising to the position of major. When Goldstein returned to Atlanta in 1946, he established an orthodontic practice with his brother Irving. In doing so, he opened the first integrated waiting room in the state of Georgia. Other than the inevitable criticisms of "nigger loving" from some of his fellow orthodontists, Goldstein was able to accomplish this with little incident. One or two of his patients did protest. Among these was a banker's wife, who agreed to use his services only so long as she could avoid any real contact with black patients. "I made her wait every time," says Goldstein.[60]

It was in 1963 that Goldstein opened the Best Western American. The original blueprints that he submitted to planning officials provided for only one water fountain in the hotel lobby. When Goldstein was informed that separate facilities for the races must be made available, he refused to install any fountain at all. As to his motivation, Goldstein suggests that he acted on a basic humanitarian impulse. "I don't think [being] Jewish had anything to do with it," he asserts. "I felt that it was the right thing to do." Word of Goldstein's intention to open the hotel on an integrated basis reached black leaders quickly. Martin Luther King arranged many meetings there. In late 1962, before the hotel was open to the public, rooms were provided for King on the mezzanine floor. Since construction work was not yet complete, King and his coworkers had to organize SCLC activity in hard hats. Personal protection was an even more serious issue for Goldstein himself. In certain quarters, the Best Western American came to be known as "Goldstein's folly." The Klan picketed repeatedly and made death threats. Nonetheless, business boomed. As the first new hotel to be built in the downtown area for forty years, the Best Western American offered some of the finest facilities in the city.[61]

Despite the example set by Goldstein, other hotels and restaurants refused

to follow. Negotiations between the mayor and the Atlanta Restaurant Association quickly broke down. In October 1963, black representatives from eighty-two civic, political, and religious bodies assembled to discuss how the impasse might be broken. The upshot of this meeting was the establishment of a new umbrella organization, the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference (ASLC). A. T. Walden and Clarence Coleman were elected chairmen.[62]

By December 1963, the ASLC had decided on a course of direct action. At a downtown rally attended by two thousand people, speakers including King and James Forman called on city officials to enforce integration in all walks of life. Sit-ins led by Dick Gregory took place at several restaurants, particularly the Dobbs and Toddle Houses. On January 2, 1964, after two weeks and twenty-four arrests, the sit-ins were called off. No charges had been pressed against the demonstrators. The situation had indeed been so peacefully resolved that Gregory claimed he and the other protesters had even bought shares in the Dobbs House chain.[63]

Buoyed by the success of the sit-ins, the ASLC steering committee polled opinion from its various affiliate organizations on the feasibility of massive street demonstrations. Among those on the steering committee itself, there were some serious reservations. Caution was also urged by the black editors of the *Atlanta Daily World*. A headline in its edition of January 7 urged that "No Hasty Decision Should Be Made on the Question Of Demos Here." Nonetheless, on January 18 the ASLC voted unanimously in support of protests to secure passage of a city ordinance outlawing segregation in all publicly licensed facilities. The campaign was to be organized by SNCC and its local affiliate, the Committee on an Appeal for Human Rights. For one restaurateur in particular, the events that followed were to spell particular trouble.[64]

Charles Lebedin owned the New York–style delicatessen at 66 Luckie Street NW. A popular eating place for Atlanta's white middle class, it was described by journalist Paul Good as "a glorified cafeteria that serves ketchup in plastic squeeze bottles and seats customers in leatherette booths." Opened in 1950, the deli had become the central link in a small chain of eating establishments run by the Jewish entrepreneur under the name Lebco, Inc. Charlie served as president, and his brothers Ben and Norman filled the posts of vice president and secretary-treasurer.[65]

Leb, as he was commonly known, had never expressed any inclination to open his doors to black customers. Illustrative of this was an incident in early June 1962. Singer Harry Belafonte had arrived in Atlanta to perform a benefit concert for the SCLC. Hours before they were due to go on stage, Belafonte

and several members of his entourage had attempted to eat lunch at Leb's, only to be turned away. That night, the singer entertained an integrated audience of over five thousand people. When he returned to Leb's the following morning, however, he was again refused service. Leb insisted that his own experiences as a Jew had sensitized him toward the suffering of African Americans. "I know how it feels to be discriminated against," he told one reporter, "and I'm a great admirer of Belafonte. But I can't integrate my restaurant because the others won't." The allusion to his own ethnic identity only further infuriated Belafonte. Rounding on Leb, he retorted, "I'm not impressed by your Jewishness."[66]

The comment was indicative of the sense of expectation that African Americans had in Jews. Leb's had briefly been targeted by black protesters during the spring and summer of 1963. When the sit-in campaign began in earnest the following January, the restaurant was again singled out by demonstrators. Much of the reason for this lay in the fact that Leb was Jewish. As Paul Good explained, "His religion plus the prominence of his place made him a special target. Many persons believed there was a necessary correlation between a Jew and liberality." Demonstrators were to be sorely disappointed.[67]

January 26, 1964, was the deadline set by the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference for substantial progress on the restaurant issue. The Atlanta Restaurant Association instead released a statement that defended the individual right of its members to manage their businesses as they saw fit. "The ever increasing trend toward centralized control and regulation," it read, "must stop before socialism is an accomplished fact." Faced also with nothing but silence from city hall, the ASLC had no alternative but to give the sit-in campaign the go-ahead.[68]

What took place outside Leb's restaurant that day set the tone for the entire campaign. As demonstrators attempted to force their way into the restaurant, there was a "flurry of swinging fists, kicking and shoving." One of the bouncers whom Leb had employed flailed wildly at the students with a padded chain. Leb himself slammed the protesters repeatedly with the restaurant's twin glass doors. White photographer Danny Lyon did little to douse the flames of Leb's fury by yelling, "You're just like the Nazis!" According to Lyon, "At that time, I was used to the idea of Jews being the oppressed, not the oppressors." A small group of unrobed Klansmen ran over to assist the restaurant owner, but they were restrained by police. Six people were injured. Once order had been restored, the demonstrators decided to march to the Downtown Motel, where Leb owned a second restaurant. Eighty-four arrests

were made during a sit-down protest in the motel lobby. Those who had not been detained by police then ventured back to Leb's for a second demonstration, this time deciding to lay siege to the restaurant rather than breach its defenses.[69]

The students returned the following afternoon. By early evening, 116 arrests had been made at three demonstrations, 49 of them outside Leb's. The Ku Klux Klan wired the mayor's office with a warning that it would have "to restore order" if the demonstrations were not stopped within forty-eight hours. Concern at the rapidly escalating tension resulted in a declaration by the police of a "state of emergency" in the downtown area. Despite the erection of a road block, that night as many as sixty students succeeded in making their way back to Leb's. A police cordon was immediately established around the restaurant, and no one was allowed to get within a block of the building. Leb then came out of the deli and attempted to escort back any potential customers standing on the opposite side of the street. When the police intervened, he remonstrated forcefully with them in a futile attempt to get himself arrested. It was then that the waitresses at the restaurant appeared on the sidewalk, holding signs that read, "Eat at Leb's. He is your friend and mine," and "How are we to feed our families?"[70]

The intensity of the demonstrations was undiminished on the morning of January 28. When four SNCC activists were arrested during a sit-in at the Piedmont Hotel, seventy-five pickets immediately organized a protest response outside Leb's. Later they marched on city hall, carrying with them a large banner that read: "As a first step, we want a public accommodation law." The Atlanta Restaurant Association responded with the announcement that its members were to express their disgust at the demonstrations by closing their businesses the following day.[71]

The closure of the restaurants provided Mayor Ivan Allen with the opportunity to call an impromptu meeting with representatives from both sides in the dispute. To the two hundred people who attended, Allen asserted that continued demonstrations would critically undermine Atlanta's reputation as a racially progressive city. It had not, for instance, escaped the press's notice that the violence which erupted on the first day of demonstrations outside Leb's had occurred on the same day that the UN Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities was visiting Atlanta.

Allen proposed a thirty-day moratorium as a means of working out a peaceful solution to the problem. Arguments over the suggested strategy exploded at a special session of the ASLC steering committee. Older leaders like Rufus

Clement and A. T. Walden enthusiastically endorsed the idea of a moratorium. Among younger activists there was some agreement to cease demonstrations, but only for fifteen days. Others were opposed to any interruption in the campaign. The eventual vote was 7 to 6 in favor of the mayor's proposal. Continued support, however, was conditional on certain terms. Most immediate of these was that all charges against arrested demonstrators be dropped. Equally important were two commitments that the ASLC demanded of the mayor and chamber of commerce. The first was that they meet with hotel and restaurant owners in order to devise a desegregation plan. The second was that they pledge themselves to promote equal employment opportunities for African Americans.[72]

Announcement of the moratorium was made on the morning of January 31. Almost immediately, members of the SNCC informed the media that demonstrations would be resumed if the ASLC's demands were not met. Ivan Allen was equally insistent that the city would accept "no ultimatums and bow to no threats." When word reached SNCC members that the mayor had indeed rejected their terms, their anger was obvious. "If anything," exclaimed John Lewis, "there will be intensified demonstrations." Once again, the chief target was Leb's. Pickets paraded outside the delicatessen on February 2 and 3, bearing signs emblazoned with the words "Democracy on the line. Why are students in jail?" Seething with resentment, SNCC activists forced their way inside the restaurant, where they set about smashing the furniture and fixtures. Some urinated on the tables. "There were sit-ins and lie-ins," recalls Cecil Alexander, "and this was a ur-ine."[73]

It was not until July 1964 that the public accommodation issue was resolved. The Civil Rights Act, signed into law on the second day of that month, prohibited racial discrimination in hotels, restaurants, and theaters. The Mayor's Committee on Community Relations was entrusted with the task of overseeing implementation of the new legislation in Atlanta. For Charlie Leb, the Civil Rights Act was the beginning of the end. His intransigence had been a cause of considerable embarrassment to the Atlanta Jewish community. Marvin Goldstein shakes his head as he concedes that Leb was a "rabid" segregationist. "He shouldn't have been," asserts Goldstein. "He came from humble surroundings."[74]

Leb had always insisted that his business remained segregated only out of respect for the sensitivities of his white customers. This was nothing if not disingenuous. Situated on the same street as Leb's was another restaurant called Harrod's, which had desegregated before the sit-ins ever began. Almost

every day, those who tried to eat at Harrod's had first to pass through a Klan picket line. By contrast, the Klan posed no threat to Charlie Leb. As Charles Wittenstein explains, "He was getting a lot of admiration and attention and was the hero of the white race and that segregationist crowd, and he bought into it and continued to do so." On January 27, 1965, a dinner was held in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., who had recently been awarded the Nobel peace prize. Among those who organized and attended the dinner were many of Atlanta's Jews. Outside on the street, Klansmen paraded in protest. Marching alongside them was Charlie Leb. His presence was enough to alienate the small number of Jews who still sympathized with him. Jews had always constituted a large share of Leb's customers. When they started to eat elsewhere, the business was badly hit. By the end of the decade, Leb was bankrupt. He died at the Atlanta Jewish Home in 1989.[75]

6 JEWISH SEGREGATIONISTS

Looking back on the desegregation crisis, the white liberal journalist Pat Watters observed, "One of the sadder phenomena across the South was the figure of the lonely, fearful Jew who sought to outbigot his white neighbors, not merely a member but a leader, often, in the Citizens' Councils." Council membership lists are hard to come by. What evidence there is suggests that Jews did not join in large numbers. Although it would be absurd to claim scientific credibility for such a statistic, of some seventy-six identifiable applications to the Capitol Citizens' Council of Little Rock, none, for instance, were signed by Jews.[1]

When Jews did join the Councils, it was often under duress. Faced with social ostracism, economic boycott, and the occasional death threat, they had little alternative. The smaller a community, the more immediately identifiable were those individuals who refused membership within the Council. Take one small town of twelve thousand where only five Jewish families lived. "This is my home and I want to stay here," exclaimed a member of one of those families. "I gave them my money and now maybe they'll forget it. I didn't feel I could stay here and not join."[2]

Yet there did exist those Jews who joined the Citizens' Council out of a genuine support for its segregationist ideals. As the white liberal journalist Hodding Carter ruefully observed, "One reason the Councils do not move against the Jewish citizens of Mississippi is that in many cases they do, in truth, share the Council's views." Corroboration for this statement came in the form of an editorial published by the *Jackson Daily News* in response to the expulsion of Jews from the North Alabama Citizens' Council. The paper was adamant that such an episode should not be repeated in Mississippi. "That anti-Semitism should be injected into the segregation battle in the South seems most unfortunate to Southern leaders who know that there are many Jewish patriots in Dixie—outstanding citizens just as devoted to the cause of States' Rights as the most ardent of Southern Gentiles."[3]

This might initially appear a rather contentious remark. We have already seen that Jews ordinarily joined the Citizens' Council not out of any ideological conviction but as a means of deflecting attention from their true feelings on the race issue. Yet in Jackson itself one of the most articulate spokespersons in defense of segregation was indeed a Jew, Al Binder. Binder, an attorney, was closely associated with the power structure, not only in Jackson but throughout the state. It was he who led the prosecution of the Freedom Riders in May 1961. "Al's one of us," asserted leaders of the Mississippi massive resistance movement. "He's our Jew."[4]

Binder was not the only Jew who publicly supported the massive resistance movement. Others were actively involved, especially in the Deep South. The earliest recruits to the Montgomery Citizens' Council included financier Les Weinstein. Investigating the Citizens' Council phenomenon in the mid-1950s, journalist Stan Opotowsky reported that the organization indeed enjoyed the ardent support of many Jews across the state of Alabama. "Let the New York Jews lick the anti-Semitism in their own back yard and leave us alone," snarled one Jewish Council member. "We're not complaining." A significant number of Alabama Jews also actively supported segregationist governor George Wallace, including Rubin Hanan, a leader of the Sephardic community in Montgomery.[5]

The vehement support of a minority of southern Jews for racial segregation is also evident from a letter written by a Jewish Council member to New Orleans rabbi Julian Feibelman. According to this anonymous author, Feibelman had no right to involve himself in the integration issue. Using the example of Israel, where Moslem and Jewish children were educated separately, the author argued that segregation was an essential element of Jewish social custom. "If segregation is sinful and in violation of the Jewish religion," he wrote, "then I guess that I'll have to join many of your relatives and my relatives that will have preceded me to the domain of Satan."[6]

Further evidence of active Jewish participation in the Citizens' Council came in 1957. The Association of Citizens' Councils issued three leaflets, expounding the segregationist position from the viewpoint of a Protestant, a Catholic, and a Jew. Ironically, the anonymous author of *A Jewish View on Segregation* eschewed any religious justification for Jim Crow. His argument was one espoused endlessly by white southerners: that the innate inferiority of African Americans would leave them incapable of competing on equal terms in an integrated society. What northerners failed to understand, the author asserted, was that it was segregation that actually enabled African

Americans to avoid extinction. White southerners were the guardians of the African American, helping them "to help themselves educationally, economically, culturally at their own rate and at the pace best suited to their capacities." Despite the anonymity of its author, there has never been any dispute about the authenticity of the leaflet. Those who joined the Citizens' Council with only the utmost reluctance were unlikely to extend their support beyond payment of their subscription fee and attendance at the occasional meeting. The existence of *A Jewish View on Segregation,* however, suggests that there were some southern Jews who openly embraced the massive resistance movement.[7]

While it is little surprise that a small minority of southern Jews should have vocally supported segregation, what is perhaps more significant is that they were so few and far between. Although no comparative framework is readily available, it would appear that Jews counted less ardent segregationists among their number than any other white group in the South. The exceptionalism of Jewish segregationists can be gauged by a comparison with Catholics. In 1955, the New Orleans Association of Catholic Laymen was established under the leadership of Emile Wagner Jr. Its express purpose was to postpone or prevent the desegregation of local schools. One concerned parent worried that integration would mean having to "remove my children from school and deprive them of a Catholic education." The reason for taking such precipitate action was all too clear. "I cannot see my daughters intermingling with negro children, especially the negro boys, who are far advance[d] in their knowledge of sex because of their degraded home life." Local Citizens' Council leader Leander Perez was a Catholic. Several New Orleans priests also voiced their support for segregation. In stark contrast, nowhere in the South did Jews organize in such determined collective opposition to integration.[8]

Although their individual identities have been established, the key question has yet to be asked: What *sort* of people were these Jewish segregationists? One theory, offered by Rabbi Gerald Wolpe of Synagogue Emanuel in Charleston, was that they were northerners who had only recently settled in the South. Eager to be accepted, they had willingly aped the opinions of their white neighbors on the race issue. This theory is borne out by the bombastic remarks of one Jew who had joined the Citizens' Council in Alabama. "Look," he told reporter Stan Opotowsky, "I hated niggers in Philadelphia, and I hate 'em in Alabama."[9]

Sociologist Alfred Hero Jr. also stated that the extreme segregationists he encountered among southern Jews were "little identified by Jewish thought

and activities." Nonetheless, it is of note that the three southern Jews most strongly identified with the massive resistance movement were all extremely committed to their faith. None saw any contradiction between the social teachings of Judaism and the segregationist philosophies they espoused. All, moreover, were native southerners, able to trace their family origins in the South back several generations. The men in question were Solomon Blatt, Sol Tepper, and Charles Bloch.[10]

Historian Cheryl Greenberg has recently called on scholars to acknowledge the role of Jewish segregationists in the massive resistance movement.[11] Blatt has, in fact, received attention from a number of writers, but his efforts to frustrate school integration in his native state of South Carolina have not been fully explored.[12] Bloch and Tepper have escaped such scrutiny. Their stories need be told, not least in order to understand why they pursued a path that led them in such a different direction from other southern Jews.

SOLOMON BLATT

During the 1950s and 1960s, South Carolina staunchly opposed school desegregation. A week before the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* Governor James F. Byrnes declared that any change in the law would be met with determined resistance. "We will maintain segregation," he asserted, "or we will abandon the public school system." During the next four years, the South Carolina General Assembly passed twenty-eight laws in a determined effort to circumvent the Supreme Court decision, including the repeal of compulsory school attendance. As a result, by 1961 South Carolina was one of only three southern states not to have admitted a single black student to a formerly all-white school. A South Carolinian interviewed by the journalist John Bartlow Martin curtly summed up the situation: "I don't see much future for integration around here."[13]

Only in the early 1960s, under the governorship of Ernest F. Hollings, did the state slowly start to accept the inevitability of integration. "As determined as we are," declared Hollings, "we of today must realize the lesson of one hundred years ago, and move on for the good of South Carolina and our United States." In January 1963 Harvey Gantt was enrolled at Clemson College, the first African American in the state to be admitted to a formerly white school. In this new spirit of moderation, Representative Heyward McDonald introduced a bill to the state legislature calling for the restoration of compulsory school attendance.[14]

Opposition to the bill was led by the Speaker of the House, Solomon Blatt. When the bill came before the legislature in 1966, Blatt introduced an amendment to exclude his native Barnwell County. For eight years, Blatt had refrained from addressing the House on a pending issue. The school attendance bill, however, had clearly stirred something deep inside him. Photographs show him stabbing his finger and waving his fist at colleagues, tears swelling in his eyes as he delivers what one paper described as "an oratorical explosion." "Do you want some sixteen-year-old so-and-so holding the hand of your little granddaughter in the classroom?" he demanded to know. "Sol Blatt doesn't want that. For God's sake, help me out."[15]

In later years, Blatt insisted that his attack on compulsory school attendance had been misrepresented by the press. He had not intended his reference to a "sixteen-year-old so-and-so" to be taken as a direct attack upon African Americans. The issue was one of class, not of race. As he asserted, "While I intended it to include Negroes, I did not mean to exclude whites."[16]

Such comments appear extremely disingenuous when one considers the speech in the context of Blatt's political career. He opposed racial integration for over thirty years. Two contrasting episodes reveal his position on the race issue. The first occurred in August 1964, when Blatt received a letter announcing that he had been elected a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Although the letter was unsigned, the enclosed membership card bore the official stamp of I. Dequincy Newman, field secretary of the South Carolina NAACP. Incandescent with rage, Blatt wrote an excoriating letter to Newman: "I hasten to advise you that I am not now, never have been, and will not be a member of the NAACP." The rest of Blatt's letter revealed an almost uncontrollable anger. "I request that you advise all parties that might have any knowledge concerning any card being mailed to me as a member of the NAACP that I am not a member of this organization and that I refuse to accept the card and will in no wise become affiliated with the organization and neither do I approve what the organization stands for. I am destroying the card." Less than a week later, Newman responded, denying that he had been involved in electing Blatt a member of the NAACP. The organization did not need his services, nor did it "offer you any assistance." This episode was probably a practical joke. Blatt was widely recognized as one of the leaders of the massive resistance movement in South Carolina. His dedication to the segregationist cause was encapsulated in a photograph published by *Life* magazine in February 1956. At a statewide demonstration of the South Carolina Citizens' Council in Colum-

bia, Blatt is pictured sitting proudly alongside some of the most notorious leaders of the massive resistance movement, including Senator James Eastland of Mississippi.[17]

Solomon Blatt was in many respects an anomaly among southern Jews, not only because of his racism but because of the political power he wielded. Blatt was born in Blackville, South Carolina, on February 27, 1895, the son of Russian immigrant parents. After completing his early education in Blackville, he entered the University of South Carolina at Columbia, graduating with a law degree in 1917. After serving in the Eighty-first Division during World War I, he returned to his home town where he established his own legal practice. In 1920 Blatt married his wife, Ethel.[18]

After an unsuccessful attempt to win a seat in the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1930, Blatt vowed that he would never again run for political office. As he bitterly exclaimed to those who urged him to launch a new campaign: "You'll never get a chance to blister me again. A burnt child is scared of fire. I have had my experience with you people, and I'm through." Yet only two years later, Blatt was elected to the House as a representative from Barnwell County. Thus began a remarkable political career. Within another two years, Blatt had been elected Speaker Pro Tempore. In 1937, he was elected Speaker of the House, a position he held until 1973. Together with Senator Edgar A. Brown and Lieutenant Governor Emile Harley, Blatt was a member of the so-called Barnwell Ring, which dominated South Carolina politics.[19]

Solomon Blatt was by no means the sole mastermind of the massive resistance movement in South Carolina. Yet Blatt's influence cannot be underestimated. As Speaker of the House, he exerted an almost dictatorial control over the legislative process in South Carolina. As Governor John West once observed, his support for an issue was crucial to its success; his opposition ensured that "it would almost surely fail."[20]

Blatt was actively involved in the legal resistance to desegregation almost from the outset of his political career. In 1938, the NAACP launched a legal challenge to enforce the admission of a black student to the law school at the University of South Carolina. Blatt chaired a three-member committee appointed by the university to assess the application. The committee could not be described as impartial. Before it had even reached its decision, Blatt issued the following public statement: "The white people of South Carolina need not have any fear as to what the outcome of this application is going to be. The Board of Trustees will do everything in their power to maintain the Uni-

versity of South Carolina for white students only, and in so doing, will protect the other institutions for white students supported by the state." The black student was denied admission.[21]

The issue, however, was far from over. Within months the University of South Carolina was faced with an even stiffer legal challenge. The Supreme Court ruled in a separate case being fought by the NAACP that states had an obligation to provide equal educational opportunities for both black and white law students.[22] Encouraged by the decision, civil rights activists again championed the admission of the black student to the University of South Carolina. Blatt led the legal resistance. The only way to avoid integration was to open a separate law school for African Americans that boasted facilities comparable to those provided for white students at the university. Blatt submitted a bill for the establishment of such a school at the all-black South Carolina State College in Orangeburg. Although the House Judiciary Committee voted overwhelmingly in support of the bill, it made no financial allocation for the establishment of the new school. Not until September 1947 was the law school finally opened, and even then its facilities were markedly inferior to those provided for white students at the University of South Carolina. Civil rights activists condemned it as a "little, cheap, half-baked school."[23]

Confronted with the mounting legal challenge to school segregation, South Carolina was among several southern states which in the 1950s moved to address the more blatant disparities in educational facilities afforded for the black and white races, and thereby to give greater practical meaning to the concept of "separate but equal." As Governor Byrnes asserted: "To meet this situation we are forced to do now what we should have been doing for the last fifty years." In order to raise revenue for his school equalization program, Byrnes encouraged the state legislature to introduce a controversial 3 percent sales tax. Blatt was an ardent supporter of the tax, believing it the best means by which South Carolina could avoid compulsory integration of its schools. When in November 1951 a number of legislators proposed to repeal portions of the tax, Blatt raised his voice in opposition. As he warned an audience of South Carolina auditors and treasurers in Columbia: "If we fall down in our efforts to provide equal facilities, we will have to face the consequences of having the federal government step in and dictate further how our schools should be operated, and in some respects by whom they should be operated." Although Blatt quelled opposition to the sales tax, in truth the school equalization plan was unsuccessful in establishing equal facilities for black students. By 1957, for instance, an average of thirty-four black children were crammed

into each classroom of Clarendon County, compared with only twenty-six whites. The same school district boasted one teacher for every nineteen white children but only one for every thirty-six African Americans.[24]

In anticipation of the *Brown* decision, South Carolina established a new school committee. Its express purpose was to plan the legal challenge to court-ordered integration. Of the fifteen members of the committee, five were appointed by the governor, five by the state senate, and five by Solomon Blatt. All five members selected by Blatt were ardent segregationists. In 1955 the committee issued its report, calling for sweeping measures to maintain school segregation. On the basis of the report, the state legislature passed a series of new laws, including the repeal of compulsory school attendance and the abolition of teacher tenure. The state board of education was also granted the right to terminate funds to any school ordered by a court to desegregate.[25]

Blatt also worked assiduously behind the scenes to crush political dissent on the integration issue. In late 1957, Joseph Margolies, a faculty member at the University of South Carolina, published an article entitled "The Role of the Segregationist." The article accused white southerners of secretly recognizing their guilt in the oppression of African Americans but refusing, out of a misplaced sense of honor, to relinquish their support for segregation. Blatt immediately wrote to Governor Byrnes recommending that "positive action should be taken by the university to get him to resign, and if this cannot be done, I think we should fire him." The following May, the university terminated Margolies's contract.[26]

Blatt is best remembered for his infamous attack on the compulsory school attendance bill. By 1966, a year after it had been introduced in the House, the bill commanded considerable political support. Blatt, however, had labored for almost thirty years to thwart integration of the educational system. His speech symbolized the defiance of the segregationist old guard, a generation of white southerners who believed that the stability of the region depended on the continued separation of the races. Yet the speech also revealed that the hard-line segregationists were beginning to lose their stranglehold on South Carolina politics. Blatt's outburst elicited only scattered applause from a small number of rural legislators. Heyward McDonald, the author of the school attendance bill, denounced the Speaker for resorting to blatant scare tactics and blind prejudice. "This doesn't deserve to be a race issue," he asserted. "If you are afraid of integration, the ultimate solution lies in education. If we are going to breed illiterates for generations after generations, then we are doing a disservice to the people who don't know any better." The House declined

to vote on the amendment introduced by Blatt, but did agree to keep the bill alive for further debate.[27]

Despite this setback, Blatt appeared to have scored a significant victory when the House eventually agreed to a compromise bill that allowed local school districts to delay compliance until 1974. In another controversial address of January 1967, Blatt argued that compulsory school attendance would result in the expenditure of "untold thousands of dollars" that would be needed to expand the existing educational system. The Speaker was careful to avoid any comments that might be interpreted as race baiting. Although the attendance law was passed, the lack of any statewide enforcement almost entirely negated its purpose.[28]

The triumph of the segregationists nonetheless proved short-lived. Despite his most determined efforts, Blatt was unable to stem the tide of reform sweeping South Carolina. In 1968 the courts ruled that the freedom of choice plan passed by the legislature was unlawful and ordered all school districts to eliminate their dual school systems the following year. In the fall of 1970, public schools throughout South Carolina opened on an integrated basis. Over the course of thirty years, Solomon Blatt had led an increasingly desperate rearguard action against court-ordered integration. At the height of the desegregation crisis, his influence in formulating the legal resistance to the *Brown* decision had been unmatched by any other legislator. In less than twenty years he had become an anachronism. His long reign as Speaker of the House was soon to end.[29]

SOL TEPPER

As the defenses of one southern city after another were overrun by civil rights activists in the early 1960s, attentions turned to that most impregnable of segregationist strongholds: Selma, Alabama. Hard-line opposition to the Supreme Court decision was embodied in the person of the local sheriff, Jim Clark. The single word emblazoned on his lapel badge said it all: "NEVER."[30]

The Jews of Selma could trace their roots in the city back to the antebellum era. It was not until July 1870, however, that the red brick Reform Temple, Mishkan Israel, was formally organized. Even the briefest stroll through the downtown streets in the 1950s would have revealed the extent to which Jewish merchants helped keep the lifeblood of the community pumping. Conspicu-

ous among the store signs were names like Cohen's, Levy's, and Rothschild's. Congregation Mishkan Israel could also boast three former mayors and seven ex-presidents of the chamber of commerce among its membership. In short, as *Montgomery Advertiser* journalist Alvin Benn states, "This is probably the most assimilated Jewish community in the world."[31]

No member of Mishkan Israel was more attuned to the southern mind-set than Sol Tepper. Born in 1908, Tepper left high school to work in the wheatfields of the West. Having served in the South Pacific during World War II, he then turned to the retail business, trading in surplus army stock. It was several years later that he began peddling an altogether different kind of wares. As sociologist Marshall Bloom observed, Tepper became "the publicist, the intellectual of sorts, for the segregationist part of the Selma population." His friendship with Jim Clark flourished to the extent that he eventually served as the sheriff's official spokesperson. This included answering most of Clark's correspondence, both by hand and over the air, on the weekly radio show *Sheriff Jim Clark's Mailbag*. By the 1950s, Tepper coupled such prestige with the prosperity he achieved through his new profession as a landlord.[32]

Tepper was once asked whether he believed, looking back on the protests in Selma during 1965, that the local black population had any legitimate grievances. "I'm tryin' to think of one," he replied. "If you can name one, I'll be glad to give my opinion. I don't know right offhand of any." During the 1960s, the median income of white families living in Dallas County was $5,150. The figure for black families was a feeble $1,393. In 1963, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) workers also discovered that of 15,000 potential black voters in Dallas County, only 335 were actually registered.[33]

The closest Tepper ever came to recognizing the socioeconomic disadvantages suffered by African Americans was his establishment, in September 1963, of the Committee for the Economic Improvement of Colored People. Its objective was to eradicate the persistent problem of black unemployment in and around Selma. Less honorable was the actual solution it suggested. Far from creating increased job opportunities for African Americans, the committee sought to relocate the unemployed to other parts of the country. Circulars were distributed to the mayor, media, and chamber of commerce in almost every large northern city. In the circulars, Tepper wrote, "Since you have set an example of employment regardless of race and your citizens believe in equal opportunities for all, we would like to send a number of our colored people to your area for employment." Prospective employers were encour-

aged to ask for as much cheap labor as they liked. Tepper added, "I believe we can supply any number that you desire." Much to his disappointment, however, the committee never received any takers.[34]

It was not until January 1965 that Selma became fully embroiled in the civil rights struggle. SNCC activists had attempted to launch a voter registration campaign in the city almost two years earlier. That campaign had floundered in the face of stubborn opposition. On July 9, 1964, State Circuit Judge James Hare had further outlawed any march or meeting in Dallas County that involved more than three people.

It was then that local activists turned for inspiration to the offices of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Atlanta. Martin Luther King Jr. and his associates duly arrived in Selma in January 1965. Their presence immediately revitalized the voter registration campaign. Over the next several weeks, over one thousand demonstrators were arrested.[35]

Among the members of Sheriff Clark's posse responsible for making these arrests was Sol Tepper. When the demonstrations began in force outside the courthouse, Tepper turned up bearing an M-1 army rifle. Clark's chief deputy, L. C. Crocker, fearing what Tepper might do with the gun, immediately ordered him to refrain from using it. "It kinda floored me a little," confessed Tepper. "I thought we was gon' have a riot right off the hand. I thought, 'Here's a riot here,' and I said, 'I asked for it. . . . I volunteered for it.'"[36]

On February 10, 120 students who had marched in silent protest through the streets of Selma were forcibly escorted on a three-mile detour outside the city by county law enforcement officers. The following morning, a furious editorial appeared in the *Selma Times-Journal.* A refusal to acknowledge even the right to peaceful protest, it asserted, would earn the city a ruinous reputation for intolerance. "Certainly," claimed the paper, "there has been ample provocation to justify the arrest of a number of the more obnoxious participants in the tiresome display of civil disobedience. On the other hand, on those occasions when the demonstrators were allowed to present their 'protests' . . . without interference, the groups of demonstrators eventually drifted away from the scene when their appearance failed to attract the attention they sought."

Tepper was sufficiently enraged by the editorial that he found time to swap his cattle prod for a pen and scribble a response, which he circulated to the editors of every leading newspaper in Alabama. It was troublesome enough, he declared, to deal with the lies and distortions published in the pages of the national press, without the city's own newspaper stooping to such treachery.

"These publishers of the *Times-Journal* sleep well," seethed Tepper, "and their families are safe. The men they criticize stay away from their homes and jobs to make them, our streets and homes secure. Has the *Times-Journal* told you that Sheriff Clark's wife and children have been sleeping at the City Jail because of the vicious threats from out of town on their lives?"[37]

The theme was a familiar one. The real victims of injustice were not so much African Americans as those white Selmians who were heroically defending their way of life against interfering outsiders. It was in the events surrounding Bloody Sunday that this idea received strongest expression. On February 18, an evening march in the nearby town of Marion was thrown into mayhem when Alabama state troopers launched an ambush outside the Zion Methodist Church. As he struggled to protect his mother from being struck by a trooper, twenty-six-year-old Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot in the stomach at close range. He died of his injuries two days later. Jackson's martyrdom served as the inspiration for a march from Selma to Montgomery, where civil rights workers planned to petition Alabama governor George Wallace for protection of black registrants.[38]

On the morning of Sunday, March 7, some six hundred African Americans assembled outside the Brown Chapel AME Church. When the marchers reached the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they saw state troopers and members of Sheriff Clark's posse waiting for them on the other side. Undaunted, they made their way across the bridge and headed east on Highway 80. They were soon forced to stop by the troopers, who blocked the road. Ordered to return to the church, the marchers refused to move. It was then that the troopers, assisted by the posse, made their attack. "The first 10 or 20 Negroes were swept to the ground screaming, arms and legs flying," reported the *New York Times*. "The mounted possemen spurred their horses and rode at a run into the retreating mass. The Negroes cried out as they crowded together for protection, and the whites on the sideline whooped and cheered." Tear gas was then fired into the huddling mass of marchers. As they fled, they were followed all the way to the Brown Chapel by the possemen. Sixty-five African Americans were eventually treated in hospitals for their injuries. "I fought in World War II," exclaimed SCLC activist Hosea Williams, who had helped lead the march, "and I once was captured by the German army, and I want to tell you that the Germans never were as inhuman as the state troopers of Alabama."[39]

The actions of the state troopers sent shockwaves throughout the nation. Tepper was accustomed to what he considered the scandalously subjective

reporting of the northern press. What he had not anticipated were the expressions of disgust printed on front pages and voiced over the airwaves in Alabama itself. That night, when he switched over to the news show on Montgomery's Channel 12, Tepper was shocked to see the injured civil rights campaigners receive such sympathetic coverage. Now, more than ever, he was sure that Selma stood alone in its heroic stand against the evils of integration. As a show of solidarity, he urged readers of the *Times-Journal* to sustain local prosperity by boycotting Montgomery merchants and shopping only in Selma. "Channel 12 appears to make much of law and order," he seethed in a letter printed in the paper the following morning. "Whose law? Whose order? King's?" Tepper reiterated once again that it was the white people of Selma whose civil rights were being undermined. "Why doesn't Channel 12 Newsroom stress the continuous provocation by these professional agitators of King's million dollar racket? Instead these local newscasters of Montgomery slap us when we attempt to defend ourselves by showing only the most unfavorable part of an event instead of the provocation leading up to it."[40]

An even greater challenge awaited Tepper. Hours after the events of Bloody Sunday, Martin Luther King appealed to clergymen across the country to join him in a "ministers' march" the next Tuesday. Among the many who answered the call was the Reverend James Reeb. A Unitarian minister from Boston, Reeb was actively involved in the race issue. As a member of the American Friends Service Committee, he had struggled to improve housing conditions within Boston's black ghetto. The violence in Selma left Reeb profoundly shocked. No sooner had the televised images had time to sink in than he was packing a bag and making plans to join the marchers. The ministers' march took place without incident on Tuesday, March 9. Having made their way to the site of the Sunday attack, the ministers offered prayers, then turned around and returned to the Brown Chapel.

Reverend Reeb had not intended to remain in Selma after the march. He had already packed his suitcase when he learned that a colleague of his would soon be arriving to add his support to the demonstrations. Pleased at such a prospect, Reeb decided to stay one more night.

That evening, Reeb ate supper with two other demonstrators at Walker's Cafe, a black-owned establishment on Washington Street. Having paid the bill, the three men began to make their way to the SCLC office on Franklin Street, where Reeb was due to address a group of black activists. Uncertain as to which direction they were heading, they took a wrong turn, which led them past the Silver Moon, a bar regarded as the seediest in Selma. Suddenly

there came the shout, "Hey, you niggers!" Emerging from the shadows, three men set upon Reeb and his associates, striking them with clubs. The attack lasted only a few seconds. Reeb appeared to have received only a small scratch above his left ear, but his vision was blurred and he complained of intense pain. As soon as the three injured men reached the SCLC office, they called an ambulance. Reeb was taken to the Burwell Infirmary, where black physician William Dinkins ordered that he be driven to the university medical center in Birmingham. The search for adequate medical assistance was delayed yet further when the ambulance crew stopped en route in a failed attempt to repair the vehicle's faulty siren. A second ambulance had to be phoned for in order to complete the journey. Four hours after the attack, Reeb arrived at the infirmary. It was too late. Surgeons performed a seventy-minute brain operation without much hope of success. Reeb slipped into a coma and died two days later, on March 11. He was thirty-eight years old.[41]

The murder of James Reeb provoked an outpouring of sympathy. Memorial rallies were held across the country, including Boston, where an estimated twenty-five thousand people gathered in silence at the City Common as a mark of respect. President Johnson assigned Air Force One to fly Reeb's widow to Selma. There, on March 15, services were held in Reeb's honor, both outside the city courthouse and at the Brown Chapel.[42]

Expressions of remorse were not so forthcoming among white Selmians. Despite the suggestion of the *Selma Times-Journal* that local clergymen organize their own memorial services, none were willing to support such an initiative. Silence was not the sole response. Sol Tepper seized the occasion to launch a series of attacks on the civil rights movement. The *Times-Journal* of March 21 included a letter from Tepper, announcing the establishment of the Citizens' Defense Fund of Selma. Three whites had been charged with assaulting an FBI agent on the Sunday of the first march. A swift police operation had also led to the arrest of those men allegedly responsible for Reeb's murder. According to Tepper, the Defense Fund had been founded by a circle of "still free white citizens" in order to assist those "illegally or unjustly accused of violating the law resulting from agitators, both home grown and outsiders, and pressure groups." In typically apocalyptic terms, the Defense Fund was described as a last defiant stand against the evils of integrationism, which had already engulfed the rest of the South. "Selma is fighting almost alone," exclaimed Tepper. "But Selma is not fighting for itself alone. It is fighting for everything that stands for decency and Western civilization."[43]

More striking still was the way Tepper employed his skills as a propagandist

to launch a smear campaign against the marchers. At some point there began to circulate a typewritten sheet entitled "Ten Big Questions Regarding the Death of Reverend Reeb in Selma, Alabama." Its central allegation was shocking. Those arrested for the murder of James Reeb, asserted the author, were innocent. The real culprits were to be found among the civil rights activists themselves. Tepper set about trying to prove his assertion by exposing what he considered the suspicious circumstances surrounding Reeb's murder. No adequate explanation had ever been offered as to why Reeb was first sent not to one of the "three fine, modern hospitals available in Selma" but to the "old, unaccredited" Burwell Infirmary. Nor had anyone accounted for the "inexcusable delay" in transporting Reeb to Birmingham. Most unsettling of all was the inexplicable change in the nature of Reeb's injuries, which occurred en route to Birmingham. Dr. Dinkins had testified that he "observed no lacerations, could demonstrate no fracture on palpation of the skull and declared Reverend Reeb's pupillary reflexes normal with no sign of brain pressure." By the time Reeb reached Birmingham, however, his head was alleged to have "been beaten to a pulp." To Tepper, it all smacked of a conspiracy. "Who," he asked, "was desperately in need of a martyr at this particular time?" The murder of James Reeb had been cynically orchestrated in order to lift the momentum of the marches by attracting the sympathy of the entire nation.[44]

Tepper elaborated upon his conspiracy theory in a letter addressed to an unknown recipient in January 1966. Having attended every day of the trial that eventually led to Reeb's assailants being convicted for murder, he considered himself capable of offering an even more informed assessment of the affair. Tepper alluded to evidence supplied by a number of defense witnesses. One motorist who had followed the ambulance along the highway for several miles insisted that it had never traveled at a speed exceeding fifteen miles per hour. At one point the ambulance even turned round and drove back in the direction of Selma. The motorist followed the ambulance to where it was parked and asked the driver if he needed help. Told that the left rear tire was flat, he made a quick inspection and saw that there was nothing wrong. A second ambulance appeared, but still there was no movement. When the exasperated motorist demanded to know what was going on, he was informed that the crew was waiting for Dr. Dinkins, who was supposed to be escorting the ambulance. The first ambulance was eventually sent to search for Dinkins's car, something which made the motorist even more suspicious, because no effort had been made to change the supposedly flat tire.

Even more damning, alleged Tepper, was the utter lack of medical assistance Reeb received en route to the infirmary. "The ministers testified no one gave Reeb oxygen along the way, they did not use an aspirator; they did not turn him on his stomach to keep him from strangling in his own vomit; they did not do one thing." All of this could be attributed to gross incompetence on the part of the ambulance crew. What convinced Tepper that there had been a "premeditated and deliberate" effort to murder Reeb was the discrepancy between Dr. Dinkins's initial report and later descriptions of the dead man's injuries. Reeb had sustained massive skull fractures. Dinkins, however, had found no evidence of any such injury. If Dinkins was telling the truth, then Reeb did not die of the blows he suffered outside the Silver Moon. "The very best one can say," concluded Tepper, "is that someone let this man die, knowingly and deliberately, but the evidence points to the fact that someone murdered this man—knowingly and deliberately for propaganda purposes." Civil rights activists had purposefully provoked Jim Clark's posse on Bloody Sunday in an attempt to produce a martyr and thereby pressure the federal government into acting on its behalf. The plan had failed, despite "weeks and weeks of the most terrible and perilous agitation that a group ever inflicted upon a formerly quiet, peaceful, law-abiding city." Ultimately, when Sheriff Clark had still not provided the marchers with a martyr, they had manufactured one themselves.[45]

Outrageous as such accusations were, they were made with articulate force. Throughout the crisis that engulfed Selma, Tepper had been one of the most powerful and persistent defenders of segregation. He was not, however, the only southern Jew to espouse the southern cause with vigor. The neighboring state of Georgia was home to arguably the most influential of all Jewish segregationists.

CHARLES BLOCH

In 1948, Harry S. Truman sought to convince an uncertain electorate that he was worthy of a second term in office. Central to his electoral success, as he saw it, was the need to capture the slowly emerging black vote. On February 2, the president went before Congress, determined to show African Americans that he was a champion of their cause. Acting in part upon the recommendations of the Committee on Civil Rights, established the previous year, Truman's "Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights" was unprecedented. Southern Democrats, however, were aghast. Be-

fore Truman had even had a chance to address Congress, Mississippi governor Fielding Wright had demanded a break with the party if its northern leaders chose to support legislation "aimed to wreck the South and its institutions." Truman moved swiftly to avert a split. Over the next nine months, not once did he allude to the subject of civil rights in any of his political speeches.[46]

Nonetheless, it was in the face of an impending crisis that delegates gathered in July for the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. Frenzied infighting over the issue of civil rights ended with northern liberals emerging victorious. The civil rights plank adopted by the party demanded that Congress act upon Truman's proposals. African Americans should enjoy full and equal political participation, equal opportunity in employment, the right to personal security, and an end to discrimination in the armed forces. Enraged, members of the Alabama and Mississippi delegations snatched up their state standards and strode out of the hall. Other southern delegates, however, decided to counterattack. From within the Georgia delegation came the plan to secure Senator Richard B. Russell's nomination for the presidency instead of Truman.[47]

What was needed was a nominating speech that would really fire up the anti-Truman forces. The man chosen to perform this onerous task was the Georgia delegation's own vice chairman, Charles Bloch. Standing in the sweltering heat and the harsh glare of the television cameras, Bloch began by urging those outraged at the new civil rights plank not to follow in the footsteps of the Mississippi and Alabama delegations but to stay and fight. Bloch himself was ready to strike the first blow. Turning on Truman supporters, he gravely reminded them of just how closely tied the Democratic Party's fortunes were to the continuing support of the South. Were it not for southern votes at the last presidential election, he insisted, Henry Wallace would now be sitting in the Oval Office. "Our thanks for that blessing to our Nation," Bloch protested, "has been the infliction upon us of the civil rights program. We propose to remain the last bulwark of our democracy." Saluting his fellow southerners, Bloch then swore defiantly: "You shall not be crucified on the cross of civil rights."

It was an electrifying performance, as even a skeptic like Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution* was forced to concede. "Charlie Bloch laid it on the line. He told them his faith and the State's faith, and if it be in a minority position and if they jest about it here at this Convention, where the old Democratic Party has disappeared and another one is emerging, it is still their faith." No matter how striking Bloch's speech, however, it could never have

been enough to secure Russell's victory. Once the first ballot had been counted, it revealed some 947 1/2 votes for Truman to 263 for Russell. The battle had nonetheless left the party feeling rather bruised and battered. It required all of Truman's oratorical skills, when he came to accept his party's nomination, to firmly lift delegates' flagging spirits. As for the defeated southerners, they were soon to realize that events in Philadelphia had been nothing but a preliminary skirmish in a much greater conflict to preserve their way of life. Waiting to help lead their forces when the time came was Charles Bloch.[48]

Bloch was born on October 10, 1893, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His father, Michel, had left his home town of Trembach in Alsace for the United States in 1881. Making his way to Baton Rouge, Michel set up business as a farmer and storekeeper. It was then that he met Bloch's mother, Lena, a schoolteacher born and raised in the city. Charles's adolescent ambition was to become a physician, and it was to this end that he enrolled at Louisiana State University. Soon suspecting that he was not cut out for such a profession after all, Bloch abandoned LSU in favor of the University of Georgia. Upon graduating, he spent a year studying at Mercer Law School before being admitted to the Georgia Bar in 1914. Shortly thereafter, he became a part-time claims agent with the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway. When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, Bloch duly volunteered his services, only to be discharged from the First Officers' Training Camp at Fort McPherson on grounds of physical disability. This proved to be a fortuitous turn of events. Returning to civilian life, Bloch met, fell in love with, and soon married Marie Klein.[49]

Rapidly, Bloch became one of his adopted state's most eminent lawyers, distinguishing himself as a leading partner in the Bloch, Hall, Hawkins, and Owens law firm. He served as chairman of a number of leading organizations, including the Georgia Bar Association, the Judicial Council of the State of Georgia, and the Rules Committee of the Georgia Supreme Court. Like so many lawyers, Bloch saw politics as a natural career progression. As early as 1927, he was elected to represent Bibb County in the Georgia General Assembly. It was here that Bloch first met Richard Russell, who was at that time campaigning as a candidate for Speaker of the House. The relationship between the two men rapidly developed into a deep and abiding mutual trust and affection. According to Russell's biographer, Gilbert Fite, Bloch was one of only two intimate friends Russell ever really had. Senator Samuel J. Ervin Jr. remarked that Bloch "loved Dick Russell and Dick Russell loved him."[50]

The *Brown* decision transformed Bloch's political career. He became an

ardent supporter of the White Citizens' Council movement, accepting regular invitations to speak at local meetings and contributing an article to the February 1963 edition of its journal, the *Citizen*. Bloch also served on the advisory board of the Federation for Constitutional Government. Formed in Memphis in December 1955, the organization was designed, according to its president, John Barr, to "coordinate the work of such groups as the Citizens' Councils and the States' Rights Council of Georgia and the Committee for Individual Rights in Virginia." Yet despite the support of such southern political stalwarts as Strom Thurmond and Herman Talmadge, the organization was a dismal failure, and it soon dissolved. Defeat and despondency do indeed appear to have been the hallmarks of Bloch's personal forays into politics. This was certainly true of the States' Rights Council of Georgia, of which Bloch served as one of two vice presidents. Essentially a White Citizens' Council under a different name, the organization was established in September 1955. Like the Federation for Constitutional Government, its initial meeting was attended by a plethora of prominent politicians. However, with no constituent allies and no mass membership of its own, the Council's influence remained minimal at best.[51]

It was as a lawyer that Bloch made his most significant contribution to the southern cause. Bloch believed that the *Brown* decision violated the constitutional right of southerners to self-government. The Supreme Court had not only ignored eighty years of precedent established in the "separate but equal" ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. It had effectively undermined the foundations upon which the United States had historically been based. "Monday used to be known as 'wash day,'" Bloch jibed to Richard Russell. "I think it still is—almost every Monday the Supreme Court washes some more law out of the Constitution." Not that he considered it a laughing matter. To Harry Golden of the *Carolina Israelite,* Bloch wrote: "I am convinced that no citizen of our nation, white or black, Jew, Protestant or Catholic, atheist or what not is safe if fundamental constitutional government is to waver from day to day at the whim of those who temporarily adjudicate."[52]

That the Supreme Court appeared to be systematically disassembling the southern caste system was, according to Bloch, the consequence of federal government manipulation of the judicial appointment process. Eight of the nine justices had held government positions before they joined the Supreme Court. The federal courts were similarly packed with individuals who owed their position not so much to any legal expertise as to their political sympathies. In "We Who Love the Law," a self-righteous editorial that appeared in

the *Georgia Bar Journal,* Bloch exclaimed, "In recent years, at any rate, political, philosophical, and psychological views have counted equally as much as legal ability and integrity, in weighing the scales for or against a prospective nominee."

Bloch's outrage at the Supreme Court's failure to apply strict legal precedent in the *Brown* decision led to the publication in 1958 of his book *States' Rights: The Law of the Land.* Of interest only to those with a love of intricate legal jargon, the book was most notable for the introductory comments of Richard Russell and Herman Talmadge, the latter praising "the genius of this great Georgian."[53]

Bloch's legal expertise was evidently much in demand among Georgia's political leaders. He was invited to speak before various congressional committees on the issue of pending civil rights legislation. His presence was requested in 1957 by Governor Marvin Griffin and in 1959 by Griffin's successor, Ernest Vandiver. Bloch also testified before the U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee on March 28, 1960, arguing against the passage of the Federal Registrars Bill, which would empower the attorney general to seek "preventive relief" against any attempt by state officials to refuse an individual the right to vote on account of his or her race. Bloch also prepared materials for Richard Russell's use in the forthcoming senatorial debate on the 1966 Civil Rights Bill.[54]

Inevitably, it was within the courtroom that Bloch made some of his most strident efforts to uphold segregation. In August 1956, he received a $5,000 fee for representing Georgia in a "friendly" suit filed against the Valdosta Board of Education. Designed by Bloch as a preventive move against the Supreme Court, the suit was expected to result in a ruling that would outlaw the use of state, county, or city funds for integrated schools within Georgia. The case, however, never reached court. According to the *Atlanta Journal,* it was feared that the NAACP "might intervene in an effort to get it transferred to the federal courts."[55]

Two other cases underline Bloch's blatant disregard for black civil liberties. In 1960 Bloch represented Terrell County in the voting rights case *United States v. Raines.* Eleven years earlier, Governor Herman Talmadge had forced through the Georgia state legislature a new literacy test intended to stymie black voter registration. By 1960, of the 5,036 African Americans in Terrell County eligible to vote, only 35 had even dared to take the literacy test, and only 4 had passed. The blatant manipulation of the literacy test was symbolized by the experience of a black schoolteacher who, despite holding a mas-

ter's degree, was declared illiterate. Her employers had then dismissed her for having tried to register. Bloch denied that the registrars were guilty of any racial discrimination. The court ruled against Terrell County. Although the case was lost, the segregationists still emerged triumphant. By 1963, despite the appointment of voting registrars by a federal judge, only 128 African Americans were registered to vote in Terrell County. That same year, Bloch served as the defense attorney in a lawsuit against police officers in Americus brought by the widow of a black man who had been beaten to death while in custody. An all-white jury acquitted the accused officers.[56]

Of the numerous cases Bloch contested as a defense attorney, none were more important than his efforts to maintain county unit rule within Georgia. Effective since 1917, the county unit system assigned six electoral votes to each of the 8 biggest counties in Georgia; four votes apiece to the 30 next largest counties; and two votes for each of the 159 remaining counties. The electoral votes of each county were conferred upon the candidate who won the most public support. Such a system effectively disenfranchised Georgia's African American population, since the counties which possessed disproportionate electoral power were also those with the smallest number of registered black voters. It took a series of legal battles, lasting sixteen years, before county unit rule was finally overturned by a three-judge court in March 1963.[57]

The lawyer who led liberal opposition to the old system was Morris Abram, later to become president of the American Jewish Committee. This led to the intriguing scenario of two southern Jews from opposite ends of the political spectrum fighting a highly public battle over the issue of civil rights. Of his opponent, Abram observed that Charles Bloch "could spin legally respectable arguments upholding segregation as easily as a carnival vendor spun cotton candy." Not to be outdone by defeat over county unit rule, Bloch later sabotaged Abram's appointment to a judicial commission for which he was being considered by the chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court. Such was the ardor of Bloch's defense of segregation, suggested Abram, that "I think he really saw himself as the Judah P. Benjamin of the new Confederacy."[58]

Fearing that the county unit system would eventually be abolished unless immediate action was taken, Bloch had, in April 1958, written to John Sammons Bell, chairman of the Georgia State Democratic Executive Committee. He urged the Georgia Democratic Party's immediate adoption of certain "rules and regulations," acceptance of which should become a precondition to participation as either a voter or a candidate in a Democratic primary. The three primary principles were a belief in segregation within Georgia's public

school system, similar support for the right of state governments to uphold segregation in all areas of public life, and an endorsement of county unit rule. Bell's reply was friendly but firm. It was not, he explained, "politically expedient" to adopt such ideas at present. Moreover, any attempt by independent candidates to challenge the county unit system would be easily defeated.[59]

Bloch wished to safeguard the integrity of the Democratic Party on both the state and national levels. After the Democratic Party failed to nominate Richard Russell for president in 1948, Bloch supported the third party campaign of Strom Thurmond. By the 1950s he and his fellow Dixiecrats had returned to the Democratic fold, determined to continue their fight for its political soul. In a 1956 letter to the *Nashville Tennessean,* Bloch was still sufficiently rebellious that he called on southern members to organize an independent third party if efforts to saw through the civil rights plank at the Democratic National Convention proved unsuccessful. However, this did not happen. Bloch continued to conduct his campaign within the existing framework of the Democratic Party. By 1960, southern segregationists realized that any repeat of the 1944 Dixiecrat revolt would almost inevitably hand the election to the Republicans. Bloch was nonetheless involved, alongside James Eastland, Sam Ervin, and several other southern platform committee members, in filing a minority report on civil rights that affirmed the right of any state to "abandon their public schools rather than . . . integrate them." In a further effort to undermine the support of the national party for desegregation, Bloch also agreed to nominate Ernest Vandiver as a vice presidential candidate.[60]

In 1956, southern state authorities embarked upon a campaign of legal harassment designed to destroy the NAACP's operations throughout the region. Their efforts effectively forced the organization to go into hiding in several states, savaging its membership numbers in the process. In Alabama, a state court ruling forced the NAACP to disband altogether.

Like many southerners, Bloch remained convinced that were it not for the troublesome influence of outsiders from the NAACP, African Americans would never have even thought to question their status in life, let alone take up an organized struggle to improve it. With the NAACP already having been forced underground, Bloch hoped to throw enough dirt on the organization's name that it would stay well and truly buried. In October 1957, Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York called for an official investigation into the Citizens' Councils, hoping as he did to discover whether they harbored "any elements or activities inimical to the conduct of the foreign and domestic policy of the

United States." Bloch, for one, welcomed the idea. He did so, however, only so long as the scope of the investigation was broadened to cover all organizations embroiled in the civil rights issue, not least the NAACP. The result, he was certain, would be that the Senate committee would give the Citizens' Councils a clean bill of health, at the same time diagnosing the cancer of Communism, which had surely spread throughout every cell of the NAACP. "Particularly with respect to that organization," Bloch suggested to Herman Talmadge, "and to any others that the resolution may embrace, I would suggest that the investigation include the names of all members of all such organizations, the production of all records of all such organizations, and particularly the names of the people who have contributed funds to such organizations, and the amounts thereof." The effect would have been to expose anyone affiliated with the NAACP to scrutiny by the state authorities. Those who were not simply scared away from the organization could expect continual interference with their every action. When nothing came of Senator Javits's original proposal, Bloch's own amendment disappeared. Not that this discouraged him. Bloch next came up with the idea of legislation "making it a felony for any person, firm, corporation, association or organization to suggest or urge, without solicitation, the bringing of any suit in the courts of the United States." Such a bill would inevitably discourage the likes of the NAACP from pursuing further legal action against existing segregationist laws. However, Talmadge, to whom Bloch looked for the introduction of such a bill into Congress, did not adopt the idea. Bloch was full of ideas on how to hold back the integrationist hordes. Although defeated time and again, he was far too obsessed to leave the issue alone, even if it meant he was still trying to steer his associates down avenues of thought long after they had proved to be dead ends. In late July 1959, Bloch introduced a resolution adopted by the Georgia Bar Association's board of governors to appoint a committee of no less than five and not more than seven members to investigate whether or not the board should file a suit against the NAACP. According to Bloch, the NAACP had violated certain state statutes relating to barratry. Whether or not the committee actually recommended filing such a suit against the NAACP is unclear. Even if it did, however, the board failed to follow the matter up.[61]

"PROUD OF MY JEWISH HERITAGE"

Solomon Blatt, Sol Tepper, and Charles Bloch shared several characteristics. All three men were from relatively small communities in the Deep South. No comparable figure emerged from either the Upper South or

the larger and more metropolitan centers of southern life where Jews were concentrated in greater numbers. This fact would suggest that it was in the smaller towns and remoter rural areas, where entrenched racial prejudice and the pressures of political conformity were at their most severe, that southern Jews most readily adapted to the segregationist mores of the white Gentile majority.

A further common feature of Blatt, Tepper, and Bloch is that all three claimed to be devout followers of the Jewish faith. "I'm proud of the fact that I'm a Jew," asserted Blatt. "I proclaim it to the whole world." Bloch boasted, "I have held every office in a temple: board member, treasurer, secretary, vice president, president. I'm proud of my Jewish heritage. I want my grandchildren to remain loyal Jews and marry within the faith. I would never leave it."[62]

It was this very consciousness of the teachings of their faith and the historical experience of their people which drove thousands across the nation to join in the struggle against Jim Crow. Not so Blatt, Tepper, and Bloch. On the contrary, none of them recognized any special relationship between Jews and African Americans. Blatt, for instance, adamantly refused to acknowledge that the historical experiences of his people in any way compelled him to assist another persecuted minority. "I lost six million of my people," he once asserted, "murdered by Hitler for no reason other than they believed in God and the Old Testament." Blatt also had personal experience of anti-Semitic prejudice. As a child, his mother had been placed in the invidious position of having to explain why he was never invited to any parties. During his early political career he was also hounded by the local Ku Klux Klan. "I suffered quite a bit from it," he later asserted. Throughout his time as speaker of the South Carolina legislature, Blatt was disparagingly referred to by his opponents as the "Barnwell Jew." His decision not to seek state office was determined by the fear that such a campaign would unleash the latent anti-Semitism that existed throughout South Carolina. "I couldn't have been elected. It was too early for one of my faith. I knew the time wasn't right."[63]

Despite his own experience of intolerance and discrimination, Blatt remained stubbornly insensitive to the suffering of African Americans under racial segregation. In 1938 Gurney E. Nelson, a black academic, published an open letter denouncing the decision of the University of South Carolina to block the admission of a black law student. Nelson was especially angry that Blatt should have been involved in the decision. Had the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust, he wondered, not taught Blatt anything about the evils of racial and religious prejudice? Blatt addressed this issue directly in a speech delivered to the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston in April 1959. If

the conditions of African Americans were in any way comparable to the experience of Jews during the Holocaust, he asserted, "I think that all good Americans should and would rally to defend the oppressed, whoever they might be." According to Blatt, however, such parallels were entirely misleading. As he boldly asserted, "Nowhere else on the face of the earth are Negroes happier, more prosperous, more contented, more a part of the general way of life than in South Carolina."[64] The speech was rapturously received throughout the state. In a concurrent resolution of the House and Senate on April 17, 1959, Blatt was commended for his "great understanding of the race relations in South Carolina and for his forthright statement on that subject."[65] The segregationist press also placed considerable emphasis upon the fact that a Jew had been so outspoken in his support of white supremacy. Blatt does not appear to have been troubled by his peculiar status.[66]

Proud as they were of their Judaism, neither Blatt nor Tepper used it to justify their position on the race issue. For the most part, they resorted to familiar rhetoric about states' rights. The federal government, Tepper insisted, was systematically eroding the autonomy of the southern states, enforcing integration against their will. It was ably assisted by a national media out to portray white southerners as a breed of bigoted backwoodsmen. What northerners refused to realize was that African Americans asserted their supposed civil rights only at the expense of white southerners' own claims to equal citizenship. Tepper still maintained in 1994 that Washington "took our civil rights away from us. We were the minority. We had no voice in what was happening. It was as if there was no Constitution of the United States."[67]

Unlike Blatt and Tepper, Bloch did use his Judaism as a means of rationalizing his opposition to integration. The *Brown* decision, he believed, posed a threat to him not only as a southerner but also as a Jew. Having dispensed with one kind of precedent, the Court had, in effect, established another: the ability to interfere with people's lives whenever it saw fit. With no means of protecting themselves against the tyranny of the Court, American citizens would be stripped of their constitutional rights. Above all, it would be Jews, forever the target of oppression, who faced the most severe threat. "I do not 'walk humbly before God,'" exclaimed Bloch, "unless I use every power of expression God has given me to endeavor to show to the people—my fellow Jewish people above all—that the chaos and confusion which threaten the South today will not be confined to the South, but, unconfined and unrestrained, will wreck this beloved nation of ours."[68]

When national organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai

B'rith (ADL) and American Jewish Committee started to involve themselves in the integration issue, Blatt, Tepper, and Bloch accused them of extreme misguidedness. As Blatt stated during his speech to the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston, "There are dangerous inclinations among some of the Jewish people today, out of the goodness of their hearts, to establish themselves as a minority force in the tragically exaggerated storm of political propaganda which surrounds and confuses the Negro question."[69] The ADL, for instance, forcefully argued that so long as prejudice existed in any form, no minority group could be entirely safe. Like Blatt, Bloch rejected this opinion entirely. It was, he exclaimed, "a cowardly and hypocritical position to take because in reality what they mean is that if the majority inflicts hardships on one group successfully, they will be encouraged to inflict hardships on other groups. It is the greatest example of wrong thinking that I have come in contact with recently." What with a prosperous legal career and intimate association with some of the region's most prominent political leaders, he demonstrated that Jews, far from being a marginalized minority, were free to float in the mainstream of southern life.[70]

Anxious to affirm both his own allegiance and that of all southern Jews to the segregationist cause, Bloch launched a series of assaults against groups like the ADL. His hope was to silence them altogether on the civil rights issue. Failing that, he sought to force them into admitting that they endorsed the *Brown* decision without the approval of their southern memberships. "The problem of segregation," he wrote to Harry Golden of the *Carolina Israelite,* "is not a Jewish problem, and Jewish organizations, as such, should take no part in it." By involving themselves in the civil rights issue, the national Jewish defense agencies were neglecting the very responsibilities they were set up to perform, namely, to look after their own. Indeed, by raising questions about the loyalties of southern Jews, they were helping to exacerbate, not eliminate, prejudice. "The Anti-Defamation League," fumed Bloch, "was formed, I thought, to combat anti-Semitism. In my opinion, it is creating far more anti-Semitism than it is allaying." The ADL's hypocrisy did not end there. According to Bloch, all the talk about black civil rights ignored the fact that the ADL, in acting without the assent of its southern members, was undermining *their* rights.[71]

In a determined effort to alter American Jewish Committee policy, Bloch lobbied ardently for changes in the command structure of both organizations and thus secure greater representation for their southern members. His struggles did not go entirely unrewarded. One success Bloch scored was in Novem-

ber 1962 at the annual conference of the southeastern region of the Union of American Hebrew Union Congregations in Mobile, Alabama. Although not actually there to seize the limelight himself, Bloch was still able to stage manage events from afar. Contacting Myer Sigal, an associate from Montgomery, Alabama, Bloch urged him to pressure the conference into accepting a proposal denouncing "northern interference" in the race issue and disclaiming any further involvement on its own part. Sigal's persistence paid off, and a compromise resolution was adopted. The proposal stated that, "in matters affecting local communities, we urge that our Union and/or its Social Action Commission consult with the constituent congregations to the end of reaching an agreement with the constituent congregations in any action contemplated, prior to their involvement in local affairs."[72]

Tepper was equally appalled at the intervention of Jews in the race issue. His coreligionists had after all played a conspicuous role in the demonstrations that took place in Selma. Of the first forty clergymen who responded to Martin Luther King's televised request for assistance, a significant number were rabbis. There was an equally strong Jewish contingent among the several thousand who marched from Selma to Montgomery. Included in its number were rabbis, students, and members of the three Jewish defense agencies. Dr. Abraham Heschel of the Jewish Theological Seminary accepted an invitation from King to stand alongside Ralph Bunche in a position of honor at the head of the marchers. King and Bunche also encouraged hundreds of black protesters to wear yarmulkes "in respectful emulation of the rabbis who participated." Demand was so great that an order was wired for the delivery of another thousand skullcaps as soon as the marchers had assembled in Montgomery for the climactic demonstration outside the state capitol.[73]

Of even more significance was the involvement of southern Jews in the march. Upon his return from Montgomery to New York, Irving Gordon, a representative of both the Jewish Labor Committee and the Workmen's Circle, exclaimed, "I was particularly proud of the many southern Jews whose very presence among the marchers belied the remarks of some to the effect that southern Jewry would fear to rise and be counted in this historic adventure." The events of Sunday, March 7, provoked a storm of outrage throughout the country. Members of Congress condemned the actions of Jim Clark and his posse as "an exercise in terror" against citizens attempting to employ their constitutional right to vote. Adding their voices to the chorus of indignation were several southern Jews. Members of the Rabbinical Assembly of Greater Miami joined 2,500 demonstrators who assembled in the city's down-

town area to protest against the violence in Selma. Later, at the Greater Bethel AME Church, Rabbis Herbert Baumguard and Leon Kronish helped lead a service in support of the Selma marchers.[74]

Tepper was incensed by the high-profile presence of Jews among the demonstrators. So long as they were seen to openly identify with the civil rights movement, his own standing with local segregationists would be under threat. As he saw it, "The Jews in Selma were pretty well looked up to. I think their reputation was injured a little bit when some of these rabbis came down here to have fun." Tepper made his position clear by penning a letter to one of the rabbis who participated in the march to Montgomery. "I am Jewish," he wrote. "I am proud of my Jewish heritage. I am not proud that you call yourself a Jew. In fact, I say you are not."[75]

Despite their conviction that there was no inherent contradiction in being both a Jew and a segregationist, Bloch and Tepper would indeed find their resolves severely tested. As we have seen, the ranks of the massive resistance movement often crawled with anti-Semites. This was true not only of the extremists but even of the supposedly "respectable" Citizens' Councils. Such a situation threatened to contradict everything for which Bloch and Tepper stood. Before long, both men would have to confront this reality.

At one meeting of the Dallas County Citizens' Council, a member turned up clutching a copy of the *Thunderbolt,* a virulently anti-Semitic journal published by the National States' Rights Party (NSRP). Tepper was enraged. Standing before the assembled audience, he exclaimed: "I'm just as staunch a segregationist as anybody in this room." Branding the *Thunderbolt* as "nothin' but a Jew-hatin' paper," Tepper then invited anyone who wanted to pursue the issue to step outside. "I'll take 'em on one by one or two by two," he announced. Alarmed at the idea of isolating Tepper and his Jewish colleagues within the Council, "Everybody in there shook my hand." No copy of the *Thunderbolt* was ever seen at a Council meeting again.[76]

Bloch had to struggle even more painfully with the reality of southern anti-Semitism. One incident in particular echoed the experience of Sol Tepper. In February 1959, while Bloch was away on business, the Georgia States' Rights Council held a dinner at the Dinkler Plaza Hotel in Atlanta. Stalking the hotel lobby before the guests took their seats was "Parson Jack" Johnston, editor of the *Georgia Tribune.* Johnston made his way deliberately through the assembled throng, stopping to offer each group of Council members a free copy of his paper. Those who leafed through its pages would have discovered that the *Tribune* contained a number of editorial outbursts, rehashing old clichés

about how the civil rights movement was a conspiracy by Jewish Communists to attain the mongrelization of the races.[77]

After a friend informed Bloch of Johnston's activities at the meeting, he called the Council's executive director, William Lufburrow, to demand an explanation. Bloch was reassured that Johnston had not been invited. According to Lufburrow, Johnston was stopped from distributing his paper out in the lobby. He then slipped surreptitiously into the dining hall, at which point he was spotted and finally ejected from the hotel. Yet when Bloch returned home, he was contacted by some concerned Jewish colleagues. According to the copy of the *Georgia Tribune* that they pressed under Bloch's nose, Johnston was due to address a States' Rights Council meeting in Valdosta. Calling first Lufburrow and then Roy Harris in Washington, Bloch demanded an explanation. Expressing their deepest regret that Bloch had been in any way offended by Johnston's associating himself with the Council, Lufburrow and Harris agreed to issue a public statement that the organization "emphatically, publicly, promptly, and vigorously" would "dissociate itself from any meeting at which Parson Jack spoke." The crisis, for now, was over.[78]

Yet there were other signs of the strength of anti-Semitism within the massive resistance movement. In 1957, terrorists had begun to bomb black and Jewish institutions. To admit that segregationist forces were responsible for such acts was to concede that African Americans and Jews alike were being branded as a common enemy of the South. Such an idea seemed so absurd to Bloch that he was convinced someone else must be to blame. Writing to Bloch about a lengthy discussion he had had with Virginia senator Harry Byrd on the subject of racial violence, Herman Talmadge observed, "He was of the opinion that the bombings of synagogues and schools in the South East were either inspired or done by Communists."[79]

The attack on yet another synagogue, some two years after the original wave of anti-Semitic outbursts, did little to change Bloch's mind. On March 25, 1960, some 180 people gathered at Temple Beth Israel in Gadsden, Alabama, for a Friday evening service "dedicating a new addition to the building." No sooner had worshippers settled into their seats to hear the sermon, however, than chaos broke out. "There was the shattering of glass in one of the stained glass windows at the rear of the Temple, the sound of a dull explosion, and the flicker of flame in the window." Clearing their way through the screaming throng, two members of the congregation rushed outside to see what had happened. There waiting for them was Jerry Hunt, a sixteen-year-old Nazi sympathizer. Raising the shotgun he had ready for them, Hunt shot

and wounded both men. He then fled. Within seven hours, members of the hastily organized manhunt arrested him.[80]

When news of events at Gadsden reached Bloch, he wrote a strongly worded statement to his friends in the Senate. As it stood, he argued, legislation providing for the protection of places of worship was wholly inadequate. Bloch urged the immediate passage of a new law, making it a federal offense to damage or deface any kind of building used to house public facilities, private companies, or government agencies. Yet with equal urgency, he pleaded that Russell and his other political associates dispel any notion developing in their minds that incidents like that in Gadsden were ever anything more than the work of deranged individuals. "Don't any further, I pray you, let the bombings of churches and synagogues and schools be confused in the minds of the American people with the so-called issue of negro voting in the South."[81]

Whether Bloch recognized it or not, this recommendation seriously compromised his otherwise dogmatic support of states' rights. The massive resistance movement operated on the assumption that the federal government had no right to impose acceptance of legislation against the will of the southern states. On the same day that he proposed the new legislation, Bloch himself had argued against increasing the power of the attorney general to protect black voting rights.

It is uncertain whether Bloch continued to promote his proposed federal law. The response of his political associates such as Russell and Vandiver is also unrecorded. Bloch's reaction to the Gadsden incident nonetheless reveals a fundamental shift in his political thinking. His demand that the federal government safeguard the security of southern synagogues suggests that he had taken the bomb attack as a threat against his own personal safety as a Jew. As such, it was the only occasion during the desegregation crisis where his Jewish identity asserted itself over his southern identity.

THE "REAL" VOICE OF SOUTHERN JEWRY

Most southern Jews were not so deluded as Charles Bloch. The rise of anti-Semitism throughout the region frightened them. Yet their anxiety to avoid controversy allowed public figures like Bloch and Tepper to claim that they were the true representatives of the southern Jewish community. W. J. Mahoney of the *Montgomery Journal* insisted that it was nonsensical for southerners to show hostility toward Jews. One had only to look at Charles

Bloch and other "stalwart defenders" of the segregationist cause to appreciate the loyalty of southern Jews. "Without them and their kind," Mahoney asserted, "we Southern Gentiles—those of us who have not sold our birthright for a mess of political pottage—would be lost indeed."[82]

In truth, however, Bloch and Tepper were never representative of southern Jews. Bloch in particular seems to have isolated himself from his coreligionists. Within only a few years of the *Brown* ruling, he had almost completely ceased going to temple, disgusted as he was by the way the pulpit was "being made a channel of broadcasting the sociological and political view of the Union of Rabbis centered in the North." Equally, he declined to contribute any further to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, arguing that "over the years the whole tenor and purpose of the organization has changed. To my mind, the change has not been for the better."[83]

Although the majority of southern Jews rejected their opinions, Bloch and Tepper were not entirely without allies. The Jews of Selma did not share the same fanatical extremism as Sol Tepper. According to sociologist Marshall Bloom, less than a fifth of Mishkan Israel's members could be described as "strongly segregationist." Nonetheless, Tepper was not the only Jew to join the Dallas County Citizens' Council. Some, it is true, did so only under duress. Auto dealer Arthur Lewis enlisted because of what he felt was "the necessity of appearing to go along with segregationist elements." Others, however, offered their support willingly. Journalist Stan Opotowksy wrote of one Jew who had moved from Brooklyn to Selma shortly before the Supreme Court decision. When the local Citizens' Council was established, he took to its cause with all the zeal of a religious convert. Indeed, it became customary for the Council to reserve a seat on its executive committee for Jews.[84]

Although their opinions ranged from relative enlightenment to outright bigotry, the Jews of Selma were all agreed on one issue. They resented the intrusion of outsiders into what they considered the city's own internal affairs. Many argued that the race problem could be resolved without the need for public demonstrations. Businessman Charles Hohenburg had, for instance, made an abortive attempt to organize discussions between black leaders and white moderates in 1963.[85]

The actions of other local Jews, however, appear to have been less constructive, their objective largely to preserve the status quo. Mayor Joe Smitherman remembers asking Jewish members of the chamber of commerce to arrange a meeting with Jews who had journeyed south to join the demonstrations. The merchants were encouraged "to talk them out of being arrested" and "to

assure them that we weren't that evil a community." A delegation was duly dispatched, including prominent businessmen Sam Barton, Jacob Bendersky, and Maurice Hollonberg, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

Another merchant who would have willingly joined the delegation if asked is Richard Rosenberg. Rosenberg dismissively refers to the demonstrators as "rabble-rousers and the people who came here just for the purpose of disturbing us." He also has unhappy memories of a boycott organized by blacks against downtown stores. The campaign received no publicity whatsoever in the pages of the *Selma Times-Journal,* but its impact was considerable. Profits fell at both Rosenberg's Boston Bargain Store and the Eagles Department Store operated by his wife. "I had a great dislike for the whole thing and what was going on," observes Rosenberg. "No particularly violent emotions, except I wished it was all over." Rosenberg was also one of several Selma Jews who joined Tepper in publicly dissociating themselves from the civil rights initiatives of the national Jewish defense agencies. One of Rosenberg's associates informed Marshall Bloom that he was more sensitive on the race issue than Tepper, but still angry that "the American Jewish Committee is not working for the Jew; they're working for the Nigras."[86]

CONCLUSION

By the early 1970s, the desegregation crisis had run its course. Of the three segregationists considered in this chapter, Solomon Blatt alone appears to have reconsidered his position on the race issue. Blatt stepped down as Speaker of the South Carolina General Assembly in 1973. In a poignant farewell address, he acknowledged the presence of newly elected black legislators and expressed pride in the racial progress made by the state. South Carolina, he exclaimed, was a state "where no longer a man's religious views, political affiliations, or the color of his skin in any way prevent him from walking the road of life to a distance from beyond that which he expected in the years gone by." In March 1974, Blatt was among the large majority of House members who voted to honor January 15 as Martin Luther King Jr. Day. He died in May 1986.[87]

Although Solomon Blatt was willing to change with the times, Charles Bloch and Sol Tepper struggled to adjust to the new political realities of the American South. Toward the end of his life, Bloch was a bitter man. By the early 1970s, he was still trying to keep up the fight, long after the South's defenses had been overrun. Despite Bloch's protestations to the contrary, his

publisher, John M. Elliott, saw no reason to issue *States' Rights* in paperback. "Our sales in recent years," he bluntly informed Bloch, "have been practically nil." Time and circumstance had overtaken Bloch. By the time he died, on August 27, 1974, the South he had known and cherished was no more.[88]

As for Tepper, time did little to diminish his wrath. He remained an utterly unreconstructed Southerner. As fellow Mishkan Israel member Muriel Lewis observed, "He's quite vehement about everything." But ideological opposition was not so strong as to prevent Tepper from later serving as a president of Mishkan Israel. In later years, Tepper pursued a respectable pastime as an amateur historian, privately publishing an account of the 1865 *Battle for Selma*. He remained extremely suspicious of anyone who asked him about the civil rights era, insisting that he would not speak to anyone who might be a reporter. Nonetheless, he offered the odd observation about the "so-called civil rights movement." Tepper extolled the virtues of Jim Clark, describing him as "a very efficient sheriff," whose tough-minded tactics helped Selma avoid bloodshed. Tepper was also convinced that the federal government was on standby throughout the Selma crisis, ready to fly in an invasion force of paratrooped marines. One other conspiracy theory he also stood by was that William and O'Neal Hoggle, Elmer Cook, and R. B. Kelley, the four men convicted for the murder of James Reeb, were all framed. Such convictions Tepper carried to the grave, where he was laid to rest in 1996.[89]

7 FEMALE REFORMERS

It seemed a familiar story. On March 20, 1955, members from across the country assembled in New Orleans for the twenty-first annual convention of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). At an unspecified point during the proceedings, a resolution was proposed, pledging support for the immediate integration of public schools throughout the South. Despite dissent from several southern members, the resolution was adopted.

In an unusual display of solidarity with the national body, delegates from the Greater New Orleans section of the NCJW agreed to issue a statement in support of the resolution. According to this statement, the New Orleans delegates would, "in cooperation with other organizations or solely, and by various methods to the best of its ability, educate and inform its members and the community to their responsibilities . . . to work toward an effective implementation of the Supreme Court Decision on Segregation." In emphasizing the need for southerners to obey the law, the authors of the statement consciously avoided the issue of morality. Anything so radical would only antagonize the local white community and undermine the position that the NCJW had just adopted. Nevertheless, there were those within the NCJW who were unwilling to be identified with even the most moderate message of support for desegregation. The result was a flurry of resignations.[1]

In assuming any initiative at all on the integration issue, the New Orleans delegates were almost unique among southern members of the NCJW. Southern chapters did occasionally seize the initiative on civil rights, such as the efforts of the Charleston Council to integrate the local police force. More typical was the response in Birmingham, Alabama. NCJW field representative Sara Lee Berkman wrote to Mrs. William B. Goldstein in January 1956, requesting any input that the local Council could provide in helping to resolve the race problem. It was an entire month before Goldstein replied, and then with little to report. Desegregation, she wrote, had been discussed during a

special meeting convened at Birmingham Southern College by the Coordinating Council of Social Forces. Among those who attended was a representative from the local Council of the NCJW, who reported only one actual agreement: "that the process will be slow and of long duration." As to how the process might be accelerated, Mrs. Goldstein offered no ideas. "I don't think this is as much information as you would like," she conceded, "but we are not able to take a position contrary to the community at large."[2]

So long as other civic and religious organizations stayed silent about the Supreme Court decision, any public proclamations from the local Council would single it out for attacks by outraged segregationists. The concerns of its members across the South eventually caused the NCJW to reconsider its stance on integration. At a special meeting of its executive committee in April 1956, it was agreed that "NCJW in recognition of the existing problem will not identify NCJW and its members with the cause of racial integration and desegregation in those communities where such identification could jeopardize the position, livelihood and safety of those members and their families."[3]

Evidently the NCJW had to endure the same internal disputes as did other Jewish organizations during the desegregation crisis. Fear led many southern Jewish women to oppose any involvement in civil rights. Yet there were still those who overcame their anxieties. Either individually or collectively, they contributed to the collapse of Jim Crow. In telling their story, this chapter throws light on the previously neglected role of Jewish women within the civil rights protests of the twentieth century.

Scholars have paid surprisingly scant attention to the role of southern white women in the civil rights movement. Women had in fact swelled the ranks of southern liberalism since the 1930s. The Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL), founded by Jessie Daniel Ames, had led the fight against one of the greatest racial injustices in the region. Women were also actively involved in other civil rights organizations such as the Southern Regional Council and local chapters of the National Urban League.

Jewish women were conspicuous by their presence among this new generation of female reformers. Mrs. Israel Kaplan, for instance, served as vice chairperson of the Florida Council of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) during the 1940s. Atlantan social worker Rhoda Kaufman also campaigned tirelessly for the CIC. Jennie Seidman was an active member of the South Carolina Progressive Democratic Party. Hannah Shulhafer of Atlanta served as a member of the Atlanta Urban League and, after World War II, the Southern Regional Council. As president of the Atlanta section of the NCJW,

Schulhafer also dedicated herself to easing the suffering of African Americans, particularly the economic plight of sharecroppers.[4]

Jewish women worked collectively toward improving the conditions of African Americans. Without any publicity, the Nashville chapter of the NCJW operated a daycare center for the children of blacks working in the defense industries during World War II.[5]

Above all, it was within the ranks of the ASWPL that Jewish women made their mark. In a list compiled by the ASWPL of twelve "Organizations Committed to a Program of Education to Prevent Lynching," three were Jewish: the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the National Council of Jewish Women, and its Southern Interstate Conference.[6]

The inclusion of the last group owed a great deal to the pioneering work of Rebecca Gershon, under whose leadership the Southern Interstate Conference issued its antilynching resolution in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1931. Born Rebecca Mathis on November 20, 1898, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Gershon was the childhood sweetheart of future *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill. According to McGill, it was Rebecca's parents, Adolph and Hanna, who first encouraged him to look beyond the conformism of a segregated southern society: "The Mathis family gave me something I would not have found anywhere else in Chattanooga—an awareness of international events and of forces which were involved in them." Graduating *cum laude* from Smith College in 1919, Rebecca married Harry Gershon, an executive for the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, two years later, moving with him to Atlanta.[7]

A member of the CIC since its inception, Gershon later switched her attentions to the ASWPL, serving as one of eleven women on the executive committee of its central council. Also active within the organization was fellow Atlantan Josephine Heyman, who served on its board. Gershon was also an active participant in the early dialogue between Atlanta's black and white communities that took place immediately after World War II. The fact-finding group of which she was a part exposed the inadequacies of the city's black schools. Only four schools possessed a kindergarten or gym, and there was not a single library. In her role as a board member of the Atlanta Urban League, Gershon convinced city authorities to distribute 30 percent of the $9.9 million bond issue on local black education. Upon Gershon's death in 1987, Grace Hamilton, former executive director of the Atlanta Urban League, described her as "very effective, a quiet person who worked behind the scenes, never in the limelight, but committed to the core."[8]

What motivated these women to immerse themselves in the incipient struggle for racial equality? There is no simple answer to this question. The advent of female suffrage undoubtedly empowered women with a stronger sense of moral and political purpose. Some, such as Hannah Shulhafer, seized the opportunity to fulfill the social activist teachings of their faith. In a letter published by the *Southern Israelite* in April 1931, Shulhafer asserted that Judaism had proved a powerful force in "fermenting a protest against every injustice." Moreover, "As women, too, we are peculiarly fitted to sense this spiritual tie that unites the world. . . . Let me repeat that as Jews and women it is our duty to work for humanity." Although religion clearly shaped the racial convictions of Hannah Shulhafer, the same was not true of other female activists.[9]

One characteristic common to all the women was their social class. During the early twentieth century, there emerged an increasing number of elite white southerners, both men and women, anxious to ameliorate the most oppressive characteristics of Jim Crow. They were influenced not only by basic humanitarian instincts but also by a more pragmatic concern for the strength and stability of southern society. This, together with what Margaret Ripley Wolfe has referred to as the tradition of feminine philanthropy dating back to the Jacksonian era, perhaps best explains this dramatic development.[10]

Confronted by the increasingly rancorous resistance of white segregationists, Jewish activists were forced onto the defensive in the 1950s. The reluctance of southern members of the NCJW to support the integrationist position of the national body reflected their growing fears about the resurgence of anti-Semitism. Yet despite the resignations and withdrawal into silence that characterized many southern women, a sizable minority chose to confront their anxieties and continue to campaign for what they believed was morally right. The experiences of these women force us to reconsider the traditional conception of the politically impotent southern Jew. It is therefore essential to understand how and why they were able to support the integrationist cause. Some were outsiders who had not been brought up to respect the sanctity of racial segregation. Others were influenced by the social reform doctrines of Reform Judaism. All shared one common characteristic: their socioeconomic status.

The women discussed in this chapter were middle-class reformers, the wives of well-to-do businessmen and professionals. Whatever opinions their husbands held on the race issue, they dared not risk any public opinion for fear of retaliatory action. Should they provide African Americans with preferential treatment, they could expect constant harassment, the termination of con-

tracts, and the boycott of their businesses. Only when confronted by the direct action campaigns of black demonstrators were Jewish businessmen dragged unwillingly into the civil rights struggle. By contrast, Jewish women enjoyed a degree of economic latitude that allowed them greater freedom of expression than their husbands. Since they did not own places of public business, they did not run the same risk of direct attack from outraged segregationists as did their husbands. Ironically, it was precisely because they were confined to the household that women were ultimately able to exert a greater influence than their husbands upon the political landscape. Not that they avoided danger altogether. The threat of social ostracism was especially real. Their actions also threatened to compromise their husbands, who struggled so hard to ingratiate themselves with their white customers. Having dissociated themselves from the civil rights activism of northern Jews, many of them were appalled that their own wives should publicly identify them with the integrationist cause. As to how all this occurred, it is to the city of Little Rock, Arkansas, that our attention must turn.

THE WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

It was in Little Rock that southern women would first involve themselves in the modern civil rights struggle. Nine black school children were scheduled to enroll at Central High on September 3, 1957. Under the pretense that any attempt to integrate the school would lead to violence, Governor Orval Faubus instructed the Arkansas National Guard to block their entry. President Eisenhower refused to intervene, agreeing only to meet with Faubus in an attempt to effect a compromise. Having promised that he would cause no further problems, Faubus nonetheless withdrew the troops from Central High. When, on the morning of Monday, September 23, the black children again attempted to enter the school, they were confronted by a mob howling, "Two, four, six, eight, we ain't gonna integrate." Fear for their safety led to the children being withdrawn from the school after only a few hours. Anxious to avoid adverse international publicity, Eisenhower was forced to order a thousand paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division to stand guard outside Central High. Even then, school integration was to prove short-lived. Ignoring a Supreme Court order, Faubus closed Little Rock's public schools for a year.[11]

As the school crisis intensified, so too did the anxieties of Little Rock Jews. Segregationists had launched a dramatic offensive against all dissenting opin-

ion. At a meeting of the Capitol Citizens' Council on September 27, members agreed to organize a boycott of the integrationist *Arkansas Gazette*. The impact was immediate. Sales of the newspaper fell by twenty thousand. Staff received death threats. The example made of the *Gazette* served as a strong warning to all racial moderates. Among those who suffered in silence were the members of both Jewish congregations. As one merchant exclaimed to a northern reporter: "Look what happened to the *Gazette*. Do you think that I want that for my business?" Enthusiastic as ever to exploit racial tension, anti-Semitic extremists started to mail their mimeographed hate sheets to every household in the city. If any Jew had expressed support for desegregation, it would have been seized as evidence of a Communist-Zionist conspiracy against the South. Panicked at such a prospect, Conservative and Reform Jews alike agreed to enforce a strict code of self-censorship.[12]

One man who made a strenuous but ultimately unsuccessful effort to alter the situation was Nat Griswold, executive director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. Only with "rare exceptions" did members of either congregation agree to offer the Council their personal or financial assistance. Griswold described a people sympathetic to the plight of African Americans but paralyzed by fear. One particular incident involved an article by Harry Golden, which had been published in the Jewish journal *Midstream*. "Unease in Dixie" described the difficulties faced by southern Jews in the wake of the Supreme Court decision. Griswold had sent a copy of the article to a "liberal Reform Jew" who he believed would understand and appreciate its content. He was wrong. As Griswold put it, he "received an unrestrained tongue-lashing by 'phone." The hysterical voice at the other end of the line exclaimed of *Midstream:* "That is a Zionist publication. My parents regard Zionists as traitors to our country. The principal Jewish leaders in Little Rock belong to the Council of American Jews, which utterly opposes Zionism. If this is what your organization stands for, I want nothing to do with it."[13]

The wall of silence that Little Rock Jews had built around themselves appeared unbreachable. As for those Jewish children actually attending high school in Little Rock, a national Jewish newspaper reported that they were, "to a man," supportive of integration but unwilling to arouse the ire of their classmates by publicly saying so. The situation had actually become so intensely awkward that half of the Jewish high school students had already left Little Rock and begun to attend schools in other states. With the school crisis still unresolved, however, racial moderates eventually began to rediscover their voice. At the forefront of liberal support for desegregation were white

women, some of whom had children at Central High. Within this group, an integral role would be performed by Jews.[14]

During the twelve months that followed the initial confrontation at Central High, racial conditions in Little Rock inexorably declined. Orval Faubus secured nomination as the Democrats' gubernatorial candidate in the July primary—a guarantee, in what was effectively a one-party system, of his reelection to a third term. The result strengthened the governor's resolve to resist desegregation at all costs. On September 12, 1958, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the school board to initiate immediate integration. Faubus responded by calling a special election for September 27 to decide whether to open the schools on an integrated basis or to close them altogether. Should voters reject integration, a chartered private school corporation dedicated to segregation would assume control of the education system. Until the result of the election was known, the schools would be ordered closed.[15]

The enormity of the situation helped galvanize liberal opposition. Under the leadership of white aristocrat Adolphine Fletcher Terry, a small group of middle-class women organized themselves into the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC). In time, the organization's membership would stretch to over sixteen hundred.[16]

The executive secretary and "organizational genius" of the WEC was Irene Samuel. Married since December 1939 to Jewish physician John Samuel, she never converted to her husband's faith. Nonetheless, she was closely identified with the city's Reform Temple, having brought both of her children up as Jews and involved herself in the social activities of the congregation. During the war, Dr. Samuel served in the Army Medical Corps in Italy and North Africa. Upon returning to Little Rock, he reopened his successful practice. In the wake of the Supreme Court decision, Samuel resolved to offer his services on an integrated basis. According to Irene Samuel, her husband "never thought anything about it." It was not long, however, before he had an awful lot to think about. After the local Citizens' Council placed his name on an economic boycott list, the doctor suffered such a severe loss of business that he contemplated leaving town. As Irene observes succinctly, "We really got down to the cloth." What eventually saved the practice was the offer, from a number of people who supported Irene's involvement in the WEC, to register as her husband's patients.[17]

The campaigning spirit of Irene Samuel served as an inspiration to the female members of the Reform Temple. Of the fifty-eight women who attended the meeting called by Mrs. Terry, only one—Alice Back—was Jewish. As the

recruitment of new members proceeded apace, however, the ranks of the WEC began to swell with Jews. The role performed by many of these women was unglamorous but greatly important. Rosa Lasker converted her front room into an office, filled with women folding flyers into envelopes. Despite the fact that she was dying of cancer, Marion Siegel telephoned around from her sick bed in order to secure crucial financial support.[18]

Perhaps the most important individual input came from Josephine Menkus, president of the local chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women. According to Irene Samuel, it was Menkus who "probably did more than anyone else" to sustain the WEC campaign. The two friends had for several years been responsible for the publication of B'nai Israel's monthly bulletin. Skilled in the use of typewriters and mimeographs, they assumed responsibility for WEC propaganda. Nonetheless, their skills were useless so long as they had no equipment on which to use them. There lay a severe obstacle. No one would allow them access to a mimeograph. Eventually the two women were able to obtain the support of a school principal and a Presbyterian minister, both of whom insisted that they only operate the machinery under cover of darkness. Samuel wrote the copy, while Menkus performed the more tedious task. "I can see her standing at a mimeograph," recalls Samuel, "with ink all over her." Samuel and Menkus eventually established their own direct mail and printing business, which they operated with the assistance of around fifteen other WEC members.[19]

The presence of so many Jews within the WEC actually posed something of a problem. Any latent anti-Semitism among the Little Rock community would be sure to surface if accusations that the WEC was somehow a Jewish organization were allowed to stick. Such a situation seriously threatened to impede the organization's chances of success. "We didn't want people to say, 'Oh, the Jews run this and the Jews run that,'" states Irene Samuel. "We were very careful to make sure that they had not a leg to stand on." One example of this "careful" approach occurred during a recruitment drive convened at the house of WEC member Jane Mendel. Mendel herself was another of those Jewish women whose contribution to the campaign proved inestimable. She had helped solicit considerable support through the establishment of a telephone chain letter. When women began to file through her front door on the day of the meeting, it was agreed that the Jewish women would be physically separated from the Gentiles. Anxious as the WEC was to attract any extra members, it wanted to counter anti-Semitic opposition by enlisting more non-Jews. There was good reason for such caution. Many whites were all too

willing to believe that Jews were masterminding the onslaught against southern tradition. A letter written by "a heartsick mother" to one of the Gentile members of the WEC is especially revealing. "I am absolutely dumbfounded at what you and Mrs. Terry are doing!" it began. "I know her and I know she isn't a Jew or a negro but I do not know you and by your picture in today's paper you could be either or both. Surely you are not an all white gentile!!" The letter concluded with an emotional plea: "For goodness sake, mind your own business and . . . let the white parents try to prevent the Jews and negroes from pushing this disgraceful thing on the white people!!"[20]

Jewish members of the WEC often had to contend with another problem: their economic positions and, in some cases, the opposition of their husbands. For most men, fear of economic reprisal restricted any room to maneuver on the race issue. Most women, by contrast, did not have businesses to protect. The Jewish presidents of Little Rock's three premier department stores all became unwillingly embroiled in the school crisis. In an effort to ruin the integrationist *Arkansas Gazette,* the Capitol Citizens' Council threatened to boycott all businesses that continued to advertise in the paper. At a meeting held in the LaFayette Hotel on September 24, 1957, it was agreed that a group of five hundred women would write letters of protest to Blass, Cohn, and Pfeifer, "stating they would not buy any more merchandise from the stores until these stores had stopped advertising from the *Arkansas Gazette.*" Designed for maximum impact, the distribution of these letters was deliberately timed to coincide with the Christmas sales rush. Equally provocative was the language employed by the Council. "When white people think of negroes in our schools and bayonets in our backs," read the letter, "they automatically think of the *Arkansas Gazette.* Before long your store will be identified with this class. The white people will soon be saying, 'The *Gazette,* supported by (FIRM NAME) is cramming the negro down our throats.'" The letter concluded with one last warning. A revolution was about to shake Little Rock, and when it did, the store owners would have to choose which side they were on. "This is your notice to make your own choice."[21]

The boycott campaign caused the three department store presidents serious problems. While they were struggling to avoid any controversy, however, their wives all became members of the WEC. This was a pattern repeated in many Jewish households. As the women immersed themselves in the WEC initiative, the most that could usually be expected from their husbands was an anonymous financial contribution. Irene Samuel remembers one call her husband received from a Jewish friend, urging him to put a stop to her very public

campaigning. "Just a minute, please," replied Dr. Samuel. "I looked at my records and I don't think I owe you any money. Therefore, she can do what she pleases." On other occasions, men refused to allow their wives to join the WEC. The most honorable exception was Joe Tenenbaum, who offered his unstinting support to the organization and the involvement in it of his wife, Carolyn. Driven by an ideological commitment to integration, Tenenbaum also enjoyed a distinct advantage over many other Jewish businessmen. Joe operated a junk business and, as Irene Samuel observes, "Nobody's going to boycott the junk business."[22]

Events in Little Rock gathered apace after the result of the special election called by Governor Faubus. An overwhelming majority of 19,470 to 7,561 voted to close the schools. Two days after the result was announced, on September 29, the school board signed an agreement leasing the public schools to the private school corporation. The agreement was swiftly overruled by a court of appeals, which again ordered the school board to implement its integration plan. Wearied by the relentless struggle between the courts and the Faubus administration, five of the board's six members resigned. The election of the sixth member, Dale Alford, to Congress caused an election for all seats on the board to be held on December 6. Ably assisted by the WEC, the chamber of commerce persuaded five moderates to declare their candidacies. The subsequent election saw the school board split between the two sides, each claiming three seats.[23]

This result would prove crucial in what turned out to be the decisive events of May and June 1959. At a meeting of the school board on May 5, a heated argument broke out over the renewal of teachers' contracts. The segregationists sought to remove more than forty teachers whom they believed overly sympathetic to the idea of mixed-race schooling. One particular argument over the reappointment of school superintendent Terrell Powell prompted the three moderates on the board to walk out. Seizing the opportunity, the segregationists proceeded to vote against the renewal of the teachers' contracts. Supported by both the WEC and the chamber of commerce, opponents of the decision organized themselves into a group known as Stop This Outrageous Purge. A recall election was held on May 25. Although the moderates on the board managed to retain their positions, the segregationists were removed.[24]

One shadow cast over the election was the persistence of anti-Semitic propaganda. A group identifying itself as the Dixie Partisans for States' Rights and Individual Liberties issued a circular that claimed "Jewish-Communists" were responsible for undermining white southerners' "most priceless heri-

tage—FREEDOM." Details were disclosed of a meeting held in Houston by the American Jewish Committee's southwestern regional office. Those present had excitedly discussed the fact that "for the first time the Jews of Little Rock were now in position to move for an integrationists' victory in the Little Rock school issue." Despite the widespread circulation of such material, Jewish members of the WEC maintained an active role right through to the election. On June 18, 1959, a federal court decision ruled that the closure of the schools was unconstitutional. The integration of Little Rock's public school system began without incident that fall.[25]

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

In November 1960, the city of New Orleans was to experience a school crisis of its own. The leadership that Jewish women assumed in resolving the crisis was striking in its similarity to Little Rock.

On February 15, 1956, a federal court ruled as unconstitutional legislation passed by the state of Louisiana to maintain separate but equal public education. That same day, federal district judge J. Skelly Wright directed the Orleans Parish School Board to "make arrangements for the admission of children . . . on a racially non-discriminatory basis with all deliberate speed." Subsequent appeals made by the school board were rejected, first by the Fifth Circuit of Appeals on March 1, 1957, and then by the Supreme Court on February 13, 1958. Still the school board refused to act. Finally, on July 15, 1959, Judge Wright ordered the board to file a desegregation plan by March 1 of the following year. At the board's request, the date was postponed until May 16.[26]

In an effort to avoid any further interruption to the integration process, white moderates organized themselves during the fall of 1959 into a campaign group called Save Our Schools (SOS). After several months acting behind the scenes, SOS announced itself to the world on April 26, 1960, avowing its intention "to further, by all proper and legitimate means, the continuation of a state-wide system of free public education." These "proper and legitimate means" included an intensive education campaign in the months immediately before the schools were due to open. Between July and September 1960, SOS issued to the media an average of three statements every week. Confronted with the almost overwhelming opposition of white parents, these statements were cautiously worded, the emphasis being on the necessity of maintaining a public school system rather than the morality of integration.[27]

The original initiative for SOS came from two women, Gladys Cahn and

Rosa Freeman Keller. To some extent, Keller was the counterpart of Irene Samuel. She too had married a Jew—in her case, architect Charles Keller—and she had become commonly associated with members of her husband's faith. Indeed, her marriage to a Jew served as the formative influence in her growing racial awareness. As one of her biographers has noted, she listened with "new ears" to the anti-Semitic remarks she heard in the casual conversation of others. Yet also like Samuel, Keller had never actually considered converting to Judaism. It is also worth noting the irony that her husband should have attempted to dissuade her from any active involvement in civil rights.[28] Gladys Cahn, by contrast, openly acknowledged the fact that she was a Jew. A onetime president of the local Urban League, she was also a firm financial supporter of the NAACP, believing it "an organization which stands for the implementation of some of the most basic principles of our democratic way of life."[29]

Save Our Schools would eventually claim a membership equal to that of the sixteen hundred who joined the WEC. Although Jews constituted little more than 1 percent of the entire New Orleans population, they were substantially represented within the organization's ranks. Jewish women were particularly prominent, among them Mathilde Dreyfous and future SOS president Helen Mervis.[30]

A comparatively small proportion of Jewish men were involved in the organization. One explanation for this was the socioeconomic status of Jews in the city. As Lawrence Powell has observed, Jews were more intimately interwoven into the social and economic fabric of New Orleans than almost anywhere else in the South. According to a survey conducted during the early 1940s, 34.3 percent of all Jews working in New Orleans were employed in the retail trade, a figure twice that of any other profession. Their average earnings were also substantially higher than those of other whites. A second study of 1960 disclosed that while only 7 percent of white New Orleanians enjoyed an annual income in excess of $10,000, the figure for Jews was 43 percent. Clearly, the Jewish community had a great deal to lose by openly supporting integration. The economic leverage that their customers exerted was enough to silence Jewish retailers. Those men who did assume an active role within SOS thus tended to pursue other professions. Label Katz of the Anti-Defamation League's New Orleans office served as the organization's director. Rabbi Julian Feibelman was one of its three cochairmen.[31]

The involvement of Jews in SOS unleashed the latent anti-Semitism of many local segregationists. When representatives from the organization first offered

their services to the Orleans Parish School Board, they were bluntly informed that the organization could be of no value so long as it was "infiltrated with so many liberals and Jews." White Citizens' Council leader Leander Perez campaigned rigorously to expose those he believed were the real brains behind SOS operations. "They are the most dangerous people in this country," he told one audience, "the Zionist Jews."[32]

Shortly before the schools were scheduled to open on September 8, the school board successfully appealed for a stay of the court order on the grounds that it was still unready. A new date was set for November 14. It was on that day that the crisis began. Word soon spread that four black first-grade girls had entered two schools in the city's Lower Ninth Ward. The white response was immediate. With children being swiftly withdrawn from the schools by their parents, the Citizens' Council attempted to organize a complete boycott of the public education system. SOS members who attempted to drive white children to the schools were met by angry mobs. One indication of whom the mob blamed came when a Methodist minister brought his daughter to school in defiance of the mob. "You ain't no preacher," jeered several white women. "You are a Jew."[33]

SOS endeavored to encourage white parents to resist the Citizens' Council boycott. Several of its members assisted white children to school, escorting them safely inside away from the braying mobs. In November 1960, SOS also established the Committee of One Hundred, a select group of business and professional men who campaigned through the press for community support of school integration.[34] The integration battle, however, would largely be waged through the courts. Negotiations between black and white community leaders would lead to the gradual and begrudging desegregation of New Orleans schools during the early 1960s.

THE PANEL OF AMERICAN WOMEN

Although the immediate objective of integrated schooling had been achieved, much work remained to be done. The process of adjustment threatened to be painful, not only for the children, parents, and teachers immediately involved but for entire communities. One organization that assisted acceptance of integration was the Panel of American Women (PAW). Founded in Kansas City, Missouri, the PAW attracted members from across the racial and religious divide. Its purpose was to promote the ideal of a cosmopolitan society by stressing the common bonds that brought all Americans

together. To this effect, members were organized in groups of five, with one representative from each of the following categories: Jews, Protestants, Catholics, African Americans, and Asian Americans. Audiences were then arranged for every panel at local schools, churches, and civic organizations—anywhere, in fact, from where an invitation could be secured. Each member of the panel was allowed five minutes in which to offer some understanding of the experiences and aspirations that shaped their personal identity. A moderator would then invite questions from the audience.

The first of its kind in the South, the Little Rock PAW was established in late 1963. Among its members were several Jewish women, including at least one whose own children were working their way through the local school system. As Barbara Phillips explained, the objective of every woman on the PAW was to allow an audience "to get to know, in a few minutes, who I was and what I thought and what I'd been through and what had hurt me and what made me feel good."[35]

Among those on whom the PAW made an immediate impression were two Jewish women from Jackson, Mississippi, Joan Geiger and Bea Gotthelf. Together, the two friends established their own local section of the PAW. The Jackson School Board had failed in its efforts to have an NAACP–financed integration suit dismissed by a U.S. district court. This had led, on August 20, 1964, to the first forty-three black school children registering at various elementary schools within the city. Much work, however, remained to be done. By December 1966, there were still only 325 black pupils enrolled at formerly all-white schools in Jackson. During the two years of its existence, the Jackson PAW endeavored to help accelerate the process. "We would go anywhere they asked us to go," recalls Bea Gotthelf. "And some places were very glad we came and agreed with what we said, and some places were very hostile."[36]

Soon the PAW had established itself in several cities across the South, the initiative often resting with Jewish women. In New Orleans, it was the organizational efforts of Helen Mervis, president of the Community Relations Council, which led to the local expansion of the PAW. It continued to operate under her leadership for four years, between 1962 and 1965. The Memphis Panel of American Women was also founded by a Jew, Jocelyn Wurzburg. Its membership included several other Jewish women, including Bernice Cooper and Marilyn Weinman.[37]

Since their aim was to articulate the experience of being a Jew in the United States, it is not surprising that Jewish members of the PAW were often devout adherents of their faith. An experience of personal suffering, and especially of

the hardships endured by their own kind over the centuries, had sensitized Jewish panelists to the plight of African Americans. For Barbara Phillips, "Lurking in the back of my mind was always this . . . strong feeling that Jewish people were not treated well here and black people were not treated well here." The social activist teachings of Reform Judaism also inspired Bea Gotthelf. "It was so important," she says of the integration issue, "that I couldn't understand, and I still can't to this day understand why other Jews couldn't equate the problems that Jews have had through these thousands of years, and the problems that the black people were having then." For yet other Jewish women, it was the experience of serving on the PAW that helped put them in tune with their often suppressed ethnic and religious identity. Jane Buchsbaum, a member of the PAW in New Orleans, asserted that her family was so assimilated that her mother advised her it would be better to marry an Episcopalian than a man of her own faith. When she began to address the issue of her Judaism before a live audience, she says, "I began to feel good about being Jewish for the first time in my life."[38]

Many of the Jewish women in the PAW were also actively involved in other pro-integration groups. Jane Mendel had been a member of the Women's Emergency Committee before she joined the PAW's Little Rock section. In 1971, she established Volunteers in Public Schools, an organization that eventually recruited over three thousand people in an effort to facilitate cross-town busing. Helen Mervis was one of the outstanding moderate leaders of New Orleans, having served as president of both Save Our Schools and the Urban League. Active alongside her in both the Urban League and PAW was Jane Buchsbaum. As a representative of the New Orleans Community Relations Council, Buchsbaum was responsible for an investigation into the extent of local public hospital compliance with integration rulings.[39]

Jackson PAW member Elaine Crystal assumed the presidency of Mississippians for Public Education in the late 1960s. Other Jews were involved in the organization, albeit in a more peripheral role. Among these women were Joan Geiger and Bea Gotthelf. The presence of Jews within the organization was even more impressive because its actual membership—despite claims in the media of running into the hundreds—was effectively no more than half a dozen. Originally established under the leadership of Mary Ann Henderson, Mississippians for Public Education promoted the importance of state-run schools rather than integration per se. As Joan Geiger's ex-husband, Sidney, states, its members "weren't for segregation, congregation or integration," but simply "for peace in the community, and whatever the law was, the law

was." This was still much too radical for many white Mississippians. Far from deflecting criticism, the organization was forced to endure a series of attacks from the White Citizens' Council. The appointment of a Jewish president was thus a brave move for the organization as a whole and for Crystal personally.[40]

The school system was still in considerable turmoil at the time Crystal became president of the organization. Mississippians had voted by a large majority in 1956 to repeal the compulsory school attendance law and replace it with a freedom of choice plan. An integrated education system could never have been accomplished so long as white parents continued to exercise their "freedom of choice" and withdraw their children from public schools. Thus it was that in 1967 and 1968 efforts were made by moderates to restore compulsory attendance. Crystal was among those who helped draft the proposed legislation. Their efforts were nonetheless in vain. Organizations such as the newly established Americans for the Preservation of the White Race rallied white opposition with arguments that "state-enforced school attendance does not promote education—it promotes indoctrination in socialism, welfarism, and atheism." The legislature refused to repeal the "freedom of choice" clause in the state constitution.[41]

More successful was Crystal's later involvement in resisting a proposed $12 million cut in public education, which the state legislature claimed was a justifiable response to the declining white enrollment. "I feel that if legislators truly have the program of the state of Mississippi in mind," Crystal told reporters in March 1970, "they will consider not decreasing appropriations for education . . . but increasing it, in order to help us catch up with the rest of the nation." Crystal remained president of Mississippians for Public Education until it disbanded in the early 1970s.[42]

SOLO INITIATIVES

That Jewish women should have so publicly associated themselves with the integrationist cause, especially in cities such as New Orleans and Little Rock where racial tensions were so marked, suggests a bravery and determination unjustly ignored by scholars. Other examples of collective action exist, such as the role of Jewish women in the establishment of the Miami chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality.[43] Still other southern Jewish women were involved in individual efforts to improve the conditions of African Americans. One particularly noteworthy example is Gertrude Weil of Goldsboro, North Carolina. In 1963, at the age of eighty-four, Weil was re-

sponsible for organizing the local Bi-Racial Council.[44] What follows are the stories of two especially strong-willed social reformers, Myra Dreifus of Memphis and Muriel Lewis of Selma.

At a time when the civil rights movement was immersed mostly in sociopolitical issues such as voting rights and integration, economic relief for impoverished African Americans became the self-appointed responsibility of Myra Dreifus. During World War II, she had served as a nurse's aide at the city's John Gaston Hospital. Working her way around the wards, she had been shocked at the often appalling physical condition of black children admitted as inpatients. Speaking years later, she observed that the children "were very easily satisfied because they probably were getting better food and more care while they were in the hospital." The experience inspired Dreifus to pursue a career in social work once the war was over. Throughout the 1950s, she served as an active member of the Memphis Mental Health Association.

At a meeting of local social workers, Dreifus learned of the many black schoolchildren in Memphis whose parents could not afford to buy them lunch. A federal government relief program had been established in 1946, but budgetary restrictions prevented its having any real impact. Of the forty thousand children qualified for free or reduced-rate lunches, only seven hundred actually received them. Dreifus, however, was determined to make a difference. Soon after the meeting, she founded an organization known as Food for Fitness. Its aim was to persuade local education authorities not only to fund free meals for disadvantaged children but also to supply every student with essential dietary supplements. Within twelve months, the Fund for Needy School Children (FNSC), as it was now officially called, was administering its program at four schools. By 1968, the figure had risen to thirty-four. The FNSC program also distributed shoes and clothing and transported children to clinics for free medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Such success had not been achieved without a struggle. To some school principals, an offer of assistance from the FNSC seemed an implicit criticism of their own performance. As Dreifus explained, "To have women coming into their school suddenly, believe me, they looked askance at us and thought, well, you know, 'Do-gooders from the white suburbs, I'll bet!'" The fact that the FNSC was composed almost entirely of white middle-class women was to cause further problems. In 1968, the organization extended its operations to include support for black mothers. The Lend-a-Hand Club was established, offering nutritional advice and sewing classes. Later, Dreifus was to candidly confess the glaring oversight of "giving women sewing machines and patterns

when they couldn't read." Whatever mistakes the organization made, it continued to offer an invaluable service to the African American community. This was true long after it had been swallowed up as an agency of a community umbrella organization called the Shelby United Neighbors.[45]

There is no evidence to suggest that Dreifus ever had to contend with intense criticism for her actions. The same could not be said of Muriel Lewis.

Until his wife attained sudden notoriety, no one in Selma had a bad word to say about Arthur Lewis. Since moving to the city in 1941, he had swiftly established himself as one of its civic leaders. Born in Newark, New Jersey, Lewis had joined the legal profession after graduating from Yale. He did not, however, remain a lawyer for very long. Instead, he accepted an invitation to manage a cigar factory that his family owned in Selma. When the family agreed to sell the factory in 1955, Arthur became a successful Buick car salesman. The esteem with which he was held by other businessmen eventually led to his election as president of the local Kiwanis club.

Despite his northern origins, Arthur Lewis was accepted as an adopted son of the South. He appeared as a regular on the local lecture circuit, entertaining audiences with scholarly discussions of Selma and its history. He converted his own car into a sort of traveling museum, plastering the walls with old pictures and documents, many detailing the role of white Selmians during the Civil War. Much about Lewis could also be surmised by the kind of company he kept. Among his friends he included none other than Sheriff Jim Clark. When the white citizens of Selma organized themselves in opposition to the Supreme Court decision on desegregation, Lewis joined the Dallas County Citizens' Council. In every respect, he appeared to have embraced Selma as it embraced him. As one observer remarked, he was "handsome, gregarious, sophisticated, more or less wealthy, and closely identified with the power structure."[46]

Yet Arthur Lewis was not all that he appeared to be. Secretly, he believed in the virtue of the *Brown* decision. Such was the extremity of opposition among most white Selmians, however, that he dared not share his convictions with anyone in town other than his wife. As Lewis lamented to Benjamin Muse of the Southern Regional Council, "There was no liberal voice whatsoever in Selma." As long as other Jews remained silent on the race issue, it was the ardently segregationist Sol Tepper who appeared to be their sole spokesperson. A moderate very much in the southern mold, Lewis had actually agreed to sign several letters drafted by Tepper that strongly criticized the involvement of national Jewish organizations in the civil rights movement. Yet that

was about all Lewis and Tepper agreed on. In the words of Lewis's otherwise tight-lipped widow, Muriel, "We didn't like him."[47]

It was a dislike of all that Tepper represented which would eventually lead Muriel Lewis to break through the silence maintained by local moderates. A teenage bride born in Manhattan, she had accompanied her husband to Selma in 1941. Nothing in her life until then had prepared her for the "quite startling" experience of living in a racially segregated society. Over twenty years later, she had still not been able to completely adjust. Nonetheless, it was only after the bloody confrontation between state troopers and civil rights marchers on March 7, 1965, that Muriel resolved to speak out. "I just got mad," she exclaims, "and when I get mad you can't keep my mouth shut."[48]

On March 14, a letter appeared in the *Times-Journal* criticizing the presence in Selma of former Florida governor LeRoy Collins. As head of the federal Community Relations Service, Collins was struggling to mediate between civil rights activists and local authorities. Alarmed at the events of Bloody Sunday, he had organized an unofficial meeting with a group of concerned local citizens. When Muriel Lewis read the criticism of Collins, she grew profoundly concerned that white intransigence would lead to a repeat of the violence on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Her angry retort was printed on the letters page of the *Times-Journal* two days later. "May I point out," she began, "that Gov. Collins is the head of a Federal Commission, set up to enforce peaceably the Civil Rights Act through negotiations." As for those who had attended the meeting, "They are to be commended, for they are trying at least to discuss rationally the terrible agitation that has stirred Selma."[49]

Despite the fact that his wife had signed her own name to the letter, Arthur Lewis was anxious not to arouse undue attention. On March 19, he and Muriel mailed copies of a letter to friends they considered sympathetic, encouraging them to express themselves in public. In part, it read: "We realize that we can no longer be afraid to speak out, but that does not mean that we are no longer a bit fearful, and we do not—nor should you—condemn our moderate friends for their silence. We know that this area is full of potential violence." Those who received the letter were asked not to show or discuss it with anyone.[50]

Soon, however, everyone in Selma was talking about the letter. A copy fell into the hands of the Citizens' Council, who distributed their own edited version throughout the city. It was then that the Lewises' telephone began to ring. "The local people didn't like it," recalls Muriel Lewis, "because I was a

Yankee *and* Jewish." Matters were not made any easier by the publication, in early April, of a letter Muriel had written to *Time* magazine. Originally, the letter had offered an endorsement of Selma's public safety director, Wilson Baker. Trained in modern policing methods, Baker had attempted to maintain peaceful order throughout the crisis. To moderates like Muriel Lewis, he offered an essential antidote to Sheriff Jim Clark. The editors at *Time* tampered with the letter, however, turning it into a rallying cry against the racial status quo. According to the published version: "There are in Selma, as everywhere, people of good faith and good intentions who were heartbroken by the acts of violence here. They will continue to try to be heard, not only by the members of the news media, but also by the people who will continue to live with this problem long after the spotlight has faded."[51]

Such were the pressures placed on the Lewises that for a time they considered leaving Selma. Nevertheless, on April 9, a meeting with a small group of moderates was arranged at their house. Waiting for those who arrived was the draft of a public statement that the Lewises wanted them to sign and publish in the *Times-Journal.* It pledged support for compliance with the law and the start of interracial negotiations as a means of resolving the crisis.

No one would sign it. Three days later, a delegation of moderates met with Muriel to tell her that she was moving too fast. Eventually, an agreement was reached. Muriel recalled, "If I would keep my mouth shut for so long, they would do what I asked them to do, and speak up." After what was deemed an acceptable wait, a statement did appear in the press. The professional status of its signatories—who included the president of the city council—helped secure influential support. In the months that followed, the wheels of reform began to turn. As will be seen, however, the trouble was not yet over.[52]

"DO WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT"

No single explanation exists as to why so many southern Jewish women immersed themselves in the civil rights struggle. Female activists often shared close friendships and common congregational membership that stirred their initial activism and then sustained their morale when they came under attack. Although they worked toward a common purpose, the women were nonetheless driven by different incentives. Some had spent their formative years outside of the South, settling in the region after they had married. As such they did not share the same unquestioning acceptance of segregation as most native southerners. Myra Dreifus had been born in Detroit, moving

to Memphis when her husband established his own jewelry business there. As she admitted, it was only with a great deal of reluctance that she agreed to go South: "I really didn't want to come [to somewhere] which had personal anti-Negro attitudes, basically." Before she journeyed to her new home in Jackson, Elaine Crystal had lived in Waterloo, Iowa. One reason she gives for the reluctance of local Jews to support her in Mississippians for a Public Education was their sense of loyalty toward the South. As she more scathingly exclaims: "Oh, I think probably that, you know, when people are looking for reasons not to get involved themselves, that was one of them." Of the other Jewish women most openly identified with racial moderation, several others had moved to the South later in life. Muriel Lewis grew up in Manhattan, moving to Selma when her husband became manager of his family's cigar factory. Helen Mervis was a native of Pittsburgh, not New Orleans. Yet it is equally true that other Jewish activists were born and raised in the South. Unlike Helen Mervis, Jane Buchsbaum had been brought up in New Orleans. Bea Gotthelf was a second-generation Mississippian.[53]

One factor common to all the women discussed in this chapter is that they all belonged to the middle and upper ranks of southern society. They shared the same anxiety as many members of the white urban elite that massive resistance would undermine the economic and social progress that southern cities had enjoyed since World War II. Jewish women also had more opportunity to act upon their grievances than did their menfolk. While in many instances their husbands shared the same convictions, seldom did they enjoy as much latitude to act in open support of integration.

One tragic illustration of this is the story of Arthur and Muriel Lewis. Concerned not to damage either his car dealership or his general standing in Selma, Arthur Lewis had concealed his feelings about integration even from close friends. It was Muriel who took the initiative of writing protest letters to the press, and only her signature appeared on those letters. Yet when angry segregationists sought revenge, Arthur was their target. Muriel was not a well-respected citizen with her own downtown business. Arthur suffered personal attacks as well as a boycott of his dealership. Eventually it became more than he could bear. He had sustained one heart attack, says Muriel, and "All this carrying on just brought on the other one that killed him." Arthur had been talking on the telephone when the fatal attack occurred on January 23, 1967. He was fifty-three years old.[54]

Whatever their individual motivations, the women shared a common identity as Jews. Some defined their Judaism in explicitly religious terms. For these

women, the social activist doctrines of Reform Judaism served as essential inspiration. "My Judaism was what involved me," affirms Elaine Crystal, "because I had always been taught that you do what you think is right." This she compares with the more laissez-faire attitudes of many Christian churches. "So many Christians didn't think they had to take any sort of stand, or take any moral position." In contrast to Crystal, other women were less obviously motivated by religious convictions. By her own admission, Myra Dreifus never attended religious services at her local synagogue. As James Wax, the rabbi of Temple Israel, observed: "She acknowledges that she is a Jew, and there is never any pretense that she isn't. But for her, doing good is religion." This statement raises the important point that female reformers like Dreifus still identified themselves as Jewish even though they were not religious. Whether they defined their Judaism in secular or religious terms, women like Crystal and Dreifus shared an ethnic identity. Collectively their actions represent a distinctive contribution from southern Jewish women to the civil rights cause.[55]

In January 1956, delegates from across the southeastern states assembled in Birmingham, Alabama, for a regional meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The keynote address was delivered by Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Boston. As he stood before the assembled audience, Gittelsohn issued a "powerful and uncompromising" statement in support of the civil rights movement. The speech delighted some but dismayed others. As the meeting descended into acrimony, one of the delegates, a rabbi, stood up and shouted that he would not risk a hair on the head of any one of his members for the life of every black man and woman in the state.[1]

Although the tone of the speech was unusually vitriolic, it did reflect the concerns of the southern rabbinate over the role of Jews in the civil rights struggle. While the overwhelming majority of southern rabbis supported racial equality in principle, in practical terms their actions were constrained by their congregations. Should rabbis immerse themselves in the civil rights struggle, it would enable segregationists to intensify their accusations of a Jewish conspiracy against the South. The rabbis would therefore put not only themselves but all southern Jews at risk. These anxieties exerted a particularly strong hold over rabbis in the smaller, more remote towns of the South. There rabbis suppressed their sympathies for the integration struggle and instead adopted a strict policy of silence.

Nonetheless, a distinct number of southern rabbis did decide, even in the most dangerous circumstances, to stand in principled opposition to segregation. In a study conducted during the late 1960s, Allen Krause concluded that southern rabbis had, at best, performed a "respectable, if not overly important role" in the civil rights crusade.[2] This assessment is essentially correct. The contribution of southern rabbis was not essential to the great successes of the civil rights movement in the South. Southern rabbis seldom, if ever, engaged in mass protest. Many eschewed the idea of direct action campaigns,

dismissing them as counterproductive. Yet as *The Quiet Voices,* a recent anthology edited by Mark Bauman and Berkley Kalin, clearly demonstrates, southern rabbis did provide significant ancillary support to the civil rights movement. Their principal contribution was as educators. Through their writings and their sermons, the rabbis helped to instill in their individual communities an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding between the races. As Bauman and Kalin aptly put it, the rabbis provided "the quiet voices" of reason that counteracted the emotional extremism of the massive resistance movement.

Southern rabbis were united across the denominational divide in their support for the principle of racial integration. In stark contrast to the Protestant and Catholic clergy, no rabbi ever attempted to devise a religious justification for segregation.[3] Only one rabbi was ever associated with the segregationist movement, and even he claimed to have been quoted out of context. Benjamin Schultz of Clarksdale, Mississippi, was quoted in the pages of the *Citizens' Council* as stating: "What America needs today is more Mississippi, not less." According to Schultz, Mississippians had led a valiant rearguard action against the incursions of both the federal government and international Communism. It was time, he insisted, for "northern preachers" to "fight the cold war for America, even if it means less time for them to attack the South." Although Schultz attained a certain notoriety as a result of this statement, he later asserted that he was not referring in any way to the race issue. On the contrary, Schultz claimed he supported the civil rights movement.[4]

Although southern rabbis endorsed integration in theory, they were nevertheless divided over what action, if any, should be taken to secure its practical implementation. The majority of those rabbis who participated in the integration struggle were from the ranks of Reform Judaism. To some degree this was simply a matter of numbers. Of the little over two hundred rabbis who occupied southern pulpits at the time of the desegregation crisis, over half were Reform.[5] The other explanation is the ideological differences between the denominations. Reform Jews were impelled by the prophetic mission to combat social injustice. Orthodox and Conservative Jews, in contrast, prioritized the preservation of the faith and traditions of their own people. Although sympathetic toward the black struggle, they largely refrained from any active support. One exception was the Atlantan Conservative rabbi Harry Epstein. Epstein spoke out in support of both the *Brown* decision and the War on Poverty. As his biographer, Mark Bauman, argues, Epstein was nonetheless unusual.[6] More typical of Orthodox Jews was Rabbi Isadore Goodman of

Memphis. In an interview with the national Jewish press, Goodman asserted that Jews had enough difficulty safeguarding their own interests without interfering in the affairs of others. In the words of the rabbi, Jews only "become more vulnerable when they dissipate their strength in other movements."[7]

Reform rabbis had, by contrast, championed black civil rights since the turn of the century. As early as May 1899, Rabbi Joseph Silverman of Richmond, Virginia, condemned the implicit endorsement of lynching by local and state authorities and called for a congressional investigation into acts of mob violence.[8] Other rabbis soon added their support to the growing liberal opposition against lynching, among them David Marx of Atlanta, William Fineshriber of Memphis, and Max Heller of New Orleans.[9] Rabbi Stanley Brav suffered retaliatory violence as a result of his public testimony against Mississippi senator Theodore Bilbo, whom he accused of having intimidated black voters during the 1946 primary election.[10] Reform rabbis were also well represented among liberal reform movements that sought to improve the economic and social conditions of African Americans. Rabbi Emil Leipziger, for instance, was instrumental in founding a citizens' committee on race relations in New Orleans during the Second World War.[11] The desegregation crisis did not therefore stir a dormant rabbinate into action on the race issue. On the contrary, the civil rights activism of Reform rabbis was rooted in a strong tradition that spanned over half a century. What follows is an analysis of nine rabbis who made conspicuous contributions to the integrationist cause.[12]

At no time did the rabbis take a collective stand in support of desegregation. On the contrary, they acted alone according to their own consciences. In the telling of their individual stories, several common themes nonetheless emerge. The first is the remarkable resolve shown by the rabbis. According to Michael Friedland, "The vast majority of white clergy either remained opposed to the nascent civil rights movement or refused to take a public stand." Those clergymen who publicly advocated desegregation did so at great risk to their personal and professional security.[13] The rabbis suffered social isolation, public rebuke, and terrorist attacks. Their determination to continue their lonely struggle repudiates the stereotypical depiction of southern Jews as a people paralyzed by fear.

The rabbis' experiences are also significant because they expose the deep fissures in the southern Jewish community that were created by the desegregation crisis. Some of the sternest criticism that the rabbis faced came from their own congregations. The public stand taken by rabbis in support of desegregation threatened to erode the already precarious security of southern

Jews. Tensions were therefore rife between the religious leadership and laypeople. In scenes reminiscent of the conflict between southern and northern representatives of the national defense agencies, panicked congregations sought to constrain the actions of their rabbis through a series of measures. Ultimately the actions of the congregations are as important as those of the rabbis in assessing the southern Jewish response to the civil rights crisis.

This chapter concentrates on the civil rights activism of Julian Feibelman of New Orleans; Emmet Frank of Alexandria, Virginia; Perry Nussbaum of Jackson, Mississippi; Jacob Rothschild of Atlanta; Charles Mantinband and David Ben-Ami of Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Ira Sanders and Elijah Palnick of Little Rock, Arkansas, and Milton Grafman of Birmingham, Alabama.

Although they were guided by a common set of religious principles, the rabbis were a diverse group. Some had spent their formative years outside of the South. Ira Sanders grew up in the border state of Missouri, before serving as the rabbi of congregations in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and New York City.[14] Rothschild was a son of the industrial Northeast, having been born in Pittsburgh. After his ordination he had served congregations in Davenport, Iowa, and in Pittsburgh before enlisting as an army chaplain during the Second World War.[15] Three rabbis were not even born in the United States. Elijah Palnick and Perry Nussbaum were Canadians, and David Ben-Ami was German.[16]

As outsiders who had only settled in the region when well into adulthood, the rabbis did not share the same conviction as other white southerners that segregation was a natural law that regulated relations between the races. When Perry Nussbaum was first offered a pulpit in the South, he responded despairingly that it would be over his "dead body to go into that benighted area." Ira Sanders had expressed similar misgivings about his appointment in Little Rock. His first reaction upon arriving in the city in September 1926 was to take the first train back to New York.[17] Although the rabbis were able to overcome their initial sense of culture shock, they never lost their conviction that segregation was morally wrong.

Place of birth is not a sufficient explanation for the civil rights activism of southern rabbis. Several of the rabbis were born and bred in the South. Julian Feibelman was a native of Jackson, Mississippi, Emmet Frank had been born in Houston, and Charles Mantinband had spent his childhood in Norfolk, Virginia.[18]

What brought this disparate band of individuals together was a basic humanitarianism. The rabbis had little to gain from their support for civil rights

and a great deal to lose: their homes, their synagogues, even their lives. Their actions therefore serve as tribute to the power of the prophetic tradition. Like thousands of other Jews throughout the United States, the rabbis were driven by the experience of the Holocaust in particular to take a determined stand against all forms of ethnic and religious discrimination. Elijah Palnick, for example, had lost a number of close relatives in the Nazi death camps. Throughout the turbulent 1950s and 1960s, the rabbis rooted their civil rights activism in the biblical call for social justice: "We, too, were slaves in the land of Egypt."[19]

"WORKING WITHOUT FEAR OF REPRISAL"

In 1955, a New York businessman wrote to Reverend Louis Twomey of New Orleans to congratulate him on his public call for an end to racial intolerance and segregation. "I haven't noticed any Southern rabbis who have shown your kind of courage in speaking out," observed the businessman, "and we Jews should be the first to do so."[20]

At the time when he wrote, most southern rabbis had refrained from any explicit endorsement of the *Brown* decision. As the civil rights movement gathered momentum during the late 1950s, the rabbis continued to act with extreme caution. As has already been argued, southern rabbis were essentially gradualist in their attitude toward desegregation. They feared that the confrontational tactics of the civil rights movement would only impede racial progress by stirring greater resentment among embattled white southerners. The rabbis instead favored the tactics of moral suasion, hoping through the power of their public addresses to persuade whites of the righteousness of racial integration. This would prove a slow and deliberate process, since the rabbis would only alienate their audience if they strayed too far ahead of public opinion. At a time when other church leaders gave active intellectual and institutional sanction to white supremacy, the rabbis nonetheless represented a potent challenge to political conformity.

The cautious response of southern rabbis to the desegregation crisis is most clearly represented in the derisive assessment of the *Brown* decision given by Julian Feibelman. The ruling, he asserted, had artificially accelerated the process of integration, imposing it upon both a black and a white community mentally unprepared for such dramatic change. "Moses was wise enough to keep his people in the wilderness forty years until an entirely new generation grew up to embrace freedom. Even then, he had his troubles and misgivings

with recalcitrant followers who wanted their freedom overnight or to return to the fleshpots of Egypt." By arbitrarily enforcing integration on white southerners, the Supreme Court was only inviting a violent backlash. The surest and safest way to achieve lasting reform, according to Feibelman, was to appeal to the finer instincts of the southern people. The preservation of law and order could only be guaranteed if they were gently coaxed into accepting integration.[21]

Despite their caution, the rabbis were ultimately drawn into explicit acts of support for desegregation. What follows is an overview of southern rabbis' involvement in the integration struggle. Taken together, these stories suggest a broad and complex pattern of civil rights activism. From public declarations of support for school desegregation to acts of private kindness toward arrested civil rights demonstrators, southern rabbis were active agents of social justice. Had the New York businessman surveyed the political situation in the South several years after he wrote his letter to Reverend Twomey, he would have been obliged to reconsider his words.

In the twenty years that preceded the Supreme Court decision, no southern rabbi had campaigned more rigorously against segregation than Ira Sanders of Little Rock. The role that he performed in resolving the school crisis in the city was a logical extension of a lifetime commitment to community action. As early as the 1920s, Sanders had tried unsuccessfully to integrate the Little Rock School of Social Work. By 1936 he had become a member of the Little Rock chapter of the NAACP and the Advisory Committee of the Arkansas Council of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. He also helped to found the Urban League of Greater Little Rock.[22]

In early 1957, state representative Lucien C. Rogers introduced four far-reaching bills to the Arkansas legislature. His purpose was to circumvent the Supreme Court decision. House Bill 322 sought to establish a state sovereignty commission, empowered to "perform any and all things" deemed necessary to protect the state of Arkansas from encroachment by the federal government. House Bill 323 legislated against compulsory attendance at integrated schools. If passed, House Bill 324 would require "persons and organizations engaged in certain activities" to register with the state and make regular reports on their income and expenses. By "certain activities" the bill essentially meant "civil rights." Its chief target therefore was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. House Bill 325 authorized school boards to use school funds to hire lawyers for integration suits.[23]

The Arkansas House of Representatives approved the bills, without debate,

by a vote of 88 to 1. Immediately the decision drew fire, especially from the Greater Little Rock Ministerial Alliance, which demanded a public hearing. By a margin of just one vote, it was agreed that such a hearing should be convened, and a time and date were announced: 7:30 P.M. on February 18, 1957. Opponents and supporters of the bills set to work preparing their speeches. Those who voiced their protest against passage of the bills included various labor officials and church leaders. Among their foremost spokesmen was Rabbi Sanders.

On the night of February 18, over nine hundred people crowded into the House chambers. The atmosphere crackled with charged emotions. Frightened that there might even be a gunman lurking in the gallery, Sanders's friends beseeched him not to speak. Yet speak he did. A photograph that appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette* the following morning shows the rabbi's determined face as he stares straight at the committee. Perhaps he was battling to block out the boos and catcalls that constantly interrupted the flow of his address. Speaking into the microphone before him, Sanders began by declaring that the Supreme Court was the "final democratic authority of the land" and its decisions should therefore be obeyed by every decent citizen. "Above my love for Arkansas," observed the rabbi solemnly, "comes my devotion to America." Sanders accused the Arkansas legislature of threatening to defy not only the Supreme Court but also the will of God. In a dramatic statement designed to cast shame upon the House, the rabbi repeated the words of Jesus as he lay dying on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Suddenly his voice rose: "Legislators! may future generations reading the statute books of Arkansas laws not be compelled to say these words of you." But the legislators were not listening. Despite their best efforts, the opponents of the bills were unable to prevent their passage. Events soon ran their course.[24]

The crisis at Central High became an international news story in September 1957. Cynically exploiting the race issue in order to win reelection, Governor Orval Faubus ordered National Guardsmen to block the entry of black children into the school. Rallied by his fiery rhetoric, the white citizens of Little Rock organized themselves in defiant opposition to the Supreme Court. Anxious to avert any further incident, President Eisenhower arranged to meet Faubus. Eisenhower believed that he had secured an agreement from the governor not to precipitate more trouble. Faubus, however, reneged on his promise. Having ordered the withdrawal of the National Guardsmen, he then retreated to a safe distance outside Little Rock. When the black chil-

dren arrived at Central High on the morning of Monday, September 23, they were confronted by a shrieking crowd that spat and shouted obscenities at them.

Although the arrival of the 101st Airborne Division succeeded in restoring order, it did not offer any permanent solution. Eisenhower therefore wrote to Episcopalian bishop Robert Brown with the suggestion that the city's clergymen help mediate. It was on the basis of this recommendation that the Ministry of Reconciliation was born. On October 4, a six-man assembly gathered at the Trinity Cathedral to discuss a plan of action. The committee included Congressman Brooks Hays, religious leaders from the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, and one representative of the Jewish faith, Rabbi Sanders. It was agreed that every house of worship in Arkansas would be invited to hold services at 11 A.M. on Saturday, October 12. Special prayers would be read, calling on the members of each and every congregation to abandon intolerance for understanding and to support law and order. The committee conceded it was not sure whether the prayers would actually accomplish anything. Sanders, however, was optimistic. Speaking to reporters, he suggested that "more things are wrought by prayer than we have ever dreamed."[25]

Between eight and ten thousand people across Arkansas attended the Columbus Day services. B'nai Israel opened its doors to five hundred of those concerned citizens. Although the Ministry of Reconciliation did not achieve any tangible results, it did effectively demonstrate the strength of moderate opinion in Little Rock. As such, it helped to inspire the emergence of Save Our Schools and the Women's Emergency Committee, organizations which rallied support for desegregation.

It was in the fall of 1959 that the first black children were admitted to formerly all-white schools. In many other walks of life, however, racial barriers remained unbroken. On January 14, 1963, an assembly of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant leaders convened in Chicago for the first National Conference on Religion and Race. Their purpose was to investigate the continuing problem of racial discrimination in religious institutions. Inspired by the Chicago meeting, three local clergymen announced on April 22 the establishment of the Greater Little Rock Council on Religion and Human Relations. The founders of the new organization were the Reverend Kenneth Teegarden of the Arkansas Council of Churches, the Most Reverend A. L. Fletcher, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Little Rock, and Rabbi Sanders. Together they described the Council as a "unique opportunity for religiously committed people in our area to speak with one voice on racial issues to their fellow citi-

zens and to the world." Their purpose was essentially twofold: first, to integrate every house of worship in the city, and second, to cooperate with various civic organizations in establishing stronger lines of communication between the races. Rabbi Sanders was appointed chairman for twelve months in April 1967, by which time the Council had been renamed the Conference on Religion and Race. The CRR continued to perform an active role in community relations during the 1960s, setting up working committees on such issues as welfare and housing.[26] Sanders stayed active despite his own retirement in May 1963. Moreover, he influenced the man who succeeded him as spiritual leader of B'nai Israel.

When he arrived in Little Rock, Elijah Palnick immediately made his presence felt. He had begun his civil rights career while serving as director of the Hillel Foundation at the University of Alabama. Together with a small band of white moderates, Palnick worked behind the scenes to integrate the campus. Soon after his arrival in Little Rock, Palnick, on behalf of the Conference on Religion and Race, organized an interracial meeting of four hundred church leaders at B'nai Israel. As vice president of the Greater Little Rock Ministerial Alliance, he also endeavored to educate local residents about the virtues of integration. Although the drama over the public schools had played itself out, there were other important issues that remained almost entirely unaddressed. Time and again, Palnick would come to appreciate that even though the schools had been integrated, there was an extreme reluctance to open other doors of opportunity to African Americans. His personal and professional association with William "Sonny" Walker was one such example.[27]

In January 1967, Walker had become the first black executive director of the Economic Opportunity Agency of Pulaski County (EOAPC). Established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 as part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, the EOAPC administered its community action programs in deprived and predominantly African American neighborhoods. Among these was a project called Summer Activities and Neighborhood Employment (SANE). It provided black schoolchildren with various recreational activities designed to keep them off the streets during the summer vacation, and it placed the responsibility for running these activities in the hands of black teenagers who had brushed with the law. It was hoped that these young offenders, who were well paid, would turn away from an otherwise impending life of crime.

When local authorities learned of the proposed project, accusations that

the EOAPC was "catering to criminals" were coupled with calls for its executive director to resign. Walker refused to abandon either the project or his position. His resolve was strengthened by the unstinting support he received from the EOAPC's board of directors. Perhaps his most ardent defender on the board was Rabbi Palnick, who had been appointed the previous year. "I don't think I would have had as much courage to stand up and resist the mayor," asserts Walker, "if I hadn't had folks like Zeke Palnick that I felt were standing with me." The EOAPC implemented the SANE project in 1967. It was a striking success. Many of the young offenders involved in the scheme were fully rehabilitated, some to the extent that they later acted as aides to members of Congress and even ran for public office themselves.[28]

The EOAPC nonetheless continued to arouse considerable public ire. Less than twelve months later, it would be forced to fight another rear guard action, this time over the appointment to its board of two local businessmen, William F. Rector and Everett Tucker Jr. Rector had been an ardent opponent of integration, advocating white flight from the public schools during the Little Rock crisis. No sooner had he settled into his seat on the board than he introduced what would become known as the "Rector Resolution." Rector urged Congressman Wilbur Mills to work for cuts in all federal spending with the exception of the Arkansas River Navigation Project. His principal target was the Office of Economic Opportunity. Rector dismissed the organization as "nonessential" and described its poverty program as "ridiculously out of perspective." Both, he insisted, should be "evaluated and/or eliminated."

Tensions increased between members of the board, and the inevitable confrontation came in December. The occasion was a meeting to discuss the appointment of a new executive director, after "Sonny" Walker had announced his intention to step down. Rector had nominated Virgil F. Gettis, an urban affairs coordinator currently working in Atlanta. Worried that Gettis would dismantle the EOAPC from within, Palnick proposed instead the black activist Willie D. Hamilton. A bitter dispute broke out between Rector and Palnick. Rector announced that his opponent had "inflamed this entire crowd, and it's a shame and a disgrace for you to do it." For several weeks, Rector attempted to rally support for his recommendation that Palnick and Dr. William Cloud not be reappointed to the board when their current terms came to end. In a determined effort to discredit both men, he and Tucker hired private detectives to uncover any sordid details about their private lives. From the opposing corner, Sonny Walker defended the rabbi and the doctor by describing them

as "concerned, honest board members who've given long hours and hard work to the development and program success of the EOA."[29]

Palnick had originally been appointed to the board as a representative of the charitable organization United Way. When his term expired in January 1969, United Way decided to drop him. Nonetheless, he returned to the board nine months later, this time as a representative of the Opportunities Industrialization Center. Dr. Cloud did not seek reelection. When Walker was eventually succeeded by Willie Hamilton, it represented a personal triumph for Palnick and a renewed commitment to combating the discrimination and poverty that still plagued so many African Americans in Pulaski County.[30]

On another level it is also worth noting the fierce loyalty that Palnick and Walker expressed for each other when either one was under fire. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, liberal whites and African Americans had collaborated on a purely pragmatic basis, working together to pursue a common political goal. Upon his arrival in the city, Palnick had played an influential role in transforming the trust that already existed between activists of both races into something altogether more personal and profound: friendship. At any of the parties regularly hosted by the Palnicks, old social boundaries soon dissolved. So well attended were these social gatherings by both blacks and whites that there appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette* an article that observed how "one well-placed bomb would set Arkansas back one hundred years if they had bombed one of our parties." Palnick also invited black friends to attend services at B'nai Israel. Again such an action was unprecedented in Little Rock. As Walker wryly remarks, before he met the rabbi, "If I went to a white church, I went to clean up, to haul some garbage away." Together, Palnick and Walker waged a small but successful campaign against institutional racism. They helped to integrate first the Rotary Club and later the Kiwanis. Although the civil rights movement had collapsed by the late 1960s, the race problem had by no means been resolved. Unlike the other rabbis discussed in this chapter, Palnick was still a young man. As a new decade dawned, he continued to campaign for a fairer community. As vice president of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, Palnick toured the state speaking to audiences about the importance of equal educational and employment opportunities. In July 1971, he publicly denounced talk of establishing a private academy in Little Rock that would enable whites to avoid complete integration of the public schools. For his tireless efforts to improve race relations in the city, Rabbi Palnick would eventually be honored by many of Little

Rock's African American churches. In 1986, he left the city for a new pulpit in Albany, Georgia.[31]

Although more moderate than Palnick in his attitude toward white segregationists, Julian Feibelman exposed himself to similar recriminations through his public fight against institutional racism. It was in 1949 that he first attained notoriety. New Orleans's black Catholic university, Xavier, had decided to honor the African American diplomat Ralph Bunche with the Francis Drexel Award for outstanding service to humanity. Bunche's achievements had an obvious resonance for Rabbi Feibelman. As the United Nations mediator for Palestine, he had been instrumental in securing peace between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East.

It was hoped that the award would be presented before an integrated audience, and to this end the Interracial Committee of New Orleans sought to hold the ceremony in a public auditorium. The Civic Auditorium, however, had an ordinance that prohibited integrated meetings. When the committee turned to the trustees of Tulane University, they were again rejected. Just as the situation was beginning to look desperate, Rabbi Feibelman offered to hold the ceremony at Temple Sinai. The Temple's board of trustees were not so certain. Although they eventually granted Feibelman's request, it was with the insistence that there be a heavy police presence outside the synagogue. This the rabbi refused to allow. Nothing, he insisted, would send a clearer signal to segregationists of just how sensitive the issue of an interracial ceremony was. It was then that "some of them shook their heads and said, 'You're making a big mistake.'" At one point it seemed they might be right. Shortly before the ceremony began, Feibelman received an anonymous phone call warning him that the stained glass in the synagogue was going to be smashed. Fortunately, the threat proved to be a hoax. Although the evening of December 15 was damp and dreary, the rain could not keep away a crowd of over two thousand, the first interracial audience of its kind in the city of New Orleans. So crowded was the temple that Feibelman spent the entire evening frantically checking that the fire exits were clear and that the ceremony was not stopped because of a violation of local safety laws.[32]

It was, however, during the following decade, as the crisis over school integration intensified, that Feibelman would be most severely tested. In September 1952, the NAACP filed suit against the Orleans Parish Board. Although the suit was decided by the Supreme Court decision less than two years later, it would be almost a decade before integration of the city's public schools became a reality. The state legislature responded to the ruling in *Brown v.*

Board of Education by establishing the Joint Committee to Maintain Segregation. By December 1953, thousands of whites had flooded the ranks of the Citizens' Council of New Orleans. The school board itself opposed integration. On August 29, 1955, it passed a resolution to hire attorney Gerald A. Rault as special counsel in matters pertaining to segregation.[33]

Enraged at the intransigence of the school board, a small band of white moderates set about collecting signatures for a petition demanding that plans be introduced for the immediate integration of the schools. In all, 180 citizens signed the petition. A conscious decision was taken not to formally organize the petitioners, because of fear that it would make them a more identifiable target for the Citizens' Council. Nonetheless, a meeting was arranged with the school board for Monday, September 12, at its offices on Carondolet Street. The petition was presented by a delegation of seven persons, their principal spokesman being Rabbi Feibelman. In an impassioned address, he urged the school board to cast its gaze at other cities where peaceful plans for integration were already being effected. Although he conceded that there was no single solution to the problem, the rabbi was adamant that a basic respect for law and order necessitated further study. "Our primary purpose," he exclaimed, "is to urge you gentlemen to face the issue of segregation in a more realistic sense than that which would specifically imply your determination to defy it or to ignore both its existence and its validity." As for the employment of attorney Gerald Rault, Feibelman fired a stinging accusation: "Some of us feel that this is a usage of the taxpayers' money designated to circumvent and defy the law. . . . In this sense it would appear to be a misusage of public monie [*sic*]."[34]

The confrontation with the school board was Feibelman's most dramatic expression of support for integration. That is not to suggest that his involvement in the school issue ended there. During the crisis, he served as cochairman of Save Our Schools. When the schools first opened on an integrated basis, he helped drive one of the black children to classes. As we shall see, none of this was achieved without the threat of personal danger ever looming over him.[35]

Jacob Rothschild was once asked by a representative from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to write a report on his activities in the area of civil rights. To this he replied, "Whatever part I played in the Atlanta story was an extremely minor one." This was an unduly modest assertion. Rothschild, admittedly, was never one to join in angry demonstrations. Like Julian Feibelman, he was a gradualist who believed that eventual acceptance of the

Brown decision could only be won through persistent appeal to the consciences of white southerners. In this endeavor he was to prove unrelenting. Through his outspoken support of integration, at a time when others chose to remain silent, Rothschild helped encourage a climate of tolerance and understanding between the races.[36]

He had started with his own congregation. A series of interracial workshops and discussion groups were organized at the Temple, enabling African Americans and Jews to meet in a context other than that of employer and employee or merchant and customer. This was often as much as Rothschild hoped to achieve. Any interaction with the wider community would, he feared, cause risk to both himself and his congregation. As he asserted in an article published two years after the *Brown* decision, "There can be no questions of public relations. He speaks as a Jew to Jews—the members of his own congregation."[37]

Yet despite his reservations, Rabbi Rothschild had, from his arrival in Atlanta, openly voiced his opposition to segregation. His anger and frustration at the treatment of African Americans inspired him to play an active role in a number of liberal organizations including the Southern Regional Council, the Georgia Council of Human Relations, and the Greater Atlanta Council on Human Relations.[38]

It was as a speaker, however, that he was arguably most effective. At a meeting of the local Kiwanis club in 1947, Rothschild condemned a move by the Georgia state legislature to reintroduce the white primary. The Supreme Court had outlawed the white primary only three years earlier. In its recognition of the common humanity of all men, the Court had ably demonstrated the differences between the United States and the Fascist hordes with which the nation was at war—or so Rothschild had thought. Yet were Americans about to foster the same forces of repression they had fought and died to defeat? Had they learned so little from the experience of war? "Democracy can only survive," exclaimed Rothschild, "if all men are able to recognize the inherent abilities of all their men." Ominously, he added that "Hitlerism still persists." The horrors of the Holocaust continued to haunt Rothschild and to shape his crusade against every form of oppression. The rabbi attracted national attention for a sermon he delivered at the Central Synagogue in New York City, during which he informed his audience: "There is a macabre and disgusting parallel between the South today and a totalitarian state."[39]

Emmet Frank earned a similar reputation for his outspoken attacks on segregation. It was for his vehement attack on Virginia senator Harry Byrd in

October 1958 that the rabbi is most remembered. Frank could not have chosen a mightier target. Byrd was a central architect of the massive resistance movement. He was, for instance, one of the key signatories of the Southern Manifesto, a stinging attack on the *Brown* decision signed by southern politicians in March 1956. The timing of Frank's sermon was no less controversial. The rabbi selected the holiest night of the Jewish year, the eve of the Day of Atonement. A more obvious means of identifying Jews with the integrationist cause would be hard to imagine. The sermon itself was a strident assault on Senator Byrd. "Let the segregationists froth and foam at the mouth," exclaimed Rabbi Frank. "There is only one word to describe their madness—Godlessness, or to coin a new synonym—Byrdliness. Byrdliness has done more harm to the stability of our country than McCarthyism." What those in the audience heard that night was perhaps the most impassioned speech given by a southern rabbi at any time during the desegregation crisis. As Frank was to discover, however, there were many who wished he had not opened his mouth at all.[40]

What is most remarkable about Frank and his fellow rabbis is that they should have so openly exposed themselves to the glare of the public spotlight. As the forces of massive resistance mobilized in opposition to the *Brown* decision, the middle ground of public opinion was rapidly eroded. The resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout the region forced the majority of southern Jews into an uneasy acceptance of racial segregation. Although their actions threatened to taint them and their congregations, the rabbis were nonetheless determined to speak out. When white moderates in New Orleans organized a petition in support of school integration, they were only able to secure 179 signatories. In contrast, almost fifteen thousand people added their names to a Citizens' Council petition for the preservation of school segregation. At the same time, anti-Semitic extremists accused Jews of using the school crisis as a means of destabilizing democratic government in the city. Given the politically charged situation, it is astonishing that Rabbi Feibelman should have acted as chief spokesperson for the white moderates. Ira Sanders similarly allowed himself to be publicly identified with the liberal cause when he was quoted on the front pages of Arkansas newspapers.[41]

Perry Nussbaum played a much more clandestine role than his colleagues in the civil rights struggle. Throughout the 1950s he refused to associate himself with the struggle against racial integration for fear that it would provoke violent retaliation from segregationists.[42] It is nonetheless an indication of his personal integrity that he should have ultimately overcome his fears and

decided to play an active role. In the Mississippi of the early 1960s, that was not a decision that Nussbaum would have taken lightly.

In December 1960, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Boynton v. Virginia* that segregated interstate bus facilities were unconstitutional. Determined to test the decision, within five months the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had launched an interracial "Freedom Ride" through the southern states. From Washington, D.C., the Freedom Riders drove almost without incident into South Carolina and then Georgia. When CORE activists crossed the state line into Alabama, trouble exploded. Angry mobs attacked the Riders in Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery, while police officers stood silently watching. Bruised and battered, the CORE activists ended their protest after their experiences in Birmingham; their seats aboard the buses were taken by SNCC activists from Nashville. It was this second group of Freedom Riders who resolved to journey on into Mississippi.[43]

Anxious to avoid any more embarrassing media coverage, the Kennedy administration secured an agreement from Mississippi governor Ross Barnett to arrest the Freedom Riders without resort to violence. An editorial in the *Citizens' Council* of June 1961 boasted that the demonstrators "have been permitted to violate not one canon of decent racial conduct. And they have been able to cause no trouble—except to several dozen press agents who must have gnashed their teeth in frustration when heads didn't crack." During the summer of 1961, 328 activists were arrested in Jackson. By June 15, the strain that their numbers placed on the Jackson city jail and the Hinds County jail resulted in the relocation of all male protesters to the state penitentiary at Parchman. Insisting that they receive equal treatment, women prisoners staged a hunger strike. They too were transferred to the maximum security wing of the Parchman penitentiary.[44]

Parchman was no holiday resort. The prison cells were dark, damp, and claustrophobic; the food was equally excruciating. Prisoners were refused all amenities such as exercise and reading matter. For many of the imprisoned Freedom Riders, the atmosphere became unbearable. At first they tried to maintain morale through prayer and song. Even this, however, was brutally suppressed. Student protester William Mahoney recalled, "Once when the Riders sang too loud for the guards, six of them were dragged down the hall with wrist-breakers . . . and thrown into dark six-by-six boxes for a couple of days." Very soon the despondency of the protesters had turned to despair.[45]

When Rabbi Nussbaum first learned of the Freedom Rides, he was as cynical as he was scared. In a scathing letter to Albert Vorspan of the Union of

American Hebrew Congregations, he clearly revealed his thoughts: "There is nothing heroic about spending the night in jail, especially since it was 'just like camp' to quote a youthful Freedom Rider." According to the rabbi, the Freedom Rides would prove counterproductive, creating problems rather than curing them. By seeking direct confrontation with southern authorities, CORE only encouraged feelings of resentment and resistance among segregationists. The Freedom Riders themselves had little to fear from this, since they would soon return to the safety of their homes in the North. For those local activists who had bravely campaigned for change before the arrival of the Freedom Riders, however, it would become even more difficult and dangerous to continue their fight. "I say let the rabbis preach from their own pulpits," exclaimed Nussbaum, "and encourage the local rabbis in their loneliness." In his panic to prevent northern rabbis from boarding the Freedom Buses, Nussbaum also sought an audience with William Kunstler and Carl Rachlin, two New York lawyers who represented the demonstrators. His appeals were spirited but unsuccessful. Despite his best efforts, Nussbaum believed he would have to brace himself for the inevitable.[46]

In counseling extreme caution, Nussbaum articulated the collective unease of all southern rabbis. Even those most sympathetic to the civil rights cause cast doubt on the efficacy of the Freedom Rides. "My feeling," observed Charles Mantinband, "is that, in the final analysis, the struggle must be carried on by local leadership, white and Negro, Christian and Jew, on the home front—working despite fear of reprisal." Mantinband perceived his own contribution to the civil rights movement as being an educational one. Through article writing and speech making, he sought to enlighten both his own congregation and the larger public as to the virtues of racial integration. This would, he hoped, help lay the foundations upon which political leaders could build, by creating a climate conducive to calm discussion.[47]

Elsewhere it will be suggested that rabbis crusading across the South established an informal communications link that kept them constantly updated on one another's experiences. Those lines were never busier than in the summer of 1961, when the rabbis exchanged opinions on how best to respond to the Freedom Rides. Jacob Rothschild wrote to Mantinband, expressing his support for the demonstrators. "They dramatize the absence of rights," he argued, "and keep the problem constantly before the people. And secondly, without them the white community tends to do nothing." Although he had more faith in the Freedom Riders than his colleague, Rothschild was not entirely certain about their tactics. The explicit involvement of Jews troubled

him in particular. "To my knowledge," he informed Al Vorspan, "there has been no such direct Methodist religious participation nor direct Presbyterian religious participation nor direct Catholic religious participation." Vorspan had earlier written to the rabbi, arguing that Jews must stand up and be counted in the civil rights struggle. According to Rothschild, such a confrontational position would almost inevitably prove counterproductive, stirring up renewed anti-Semitism. Like Mantinband, he worried that this would undermine his ability to continue his own behind-the-scenes diplomacy. To Vorspan he asserted: "I firmly believe that your premise is entirely wrong and that it can not only be wrong but harmful."[48]

Much as he disagreed with their methods, Nussbaum still shared the same objectives as the Freedom Riders. When he heard of their incarceration, he swiftly resolved to offer them his support. Every Thursday throughout the summer of 1961, Nussbaum packed essential supplies such as cigarettes and soap into his car and drove 150 miles to Parchman. Although his official purpose was to attend to the spiritual needs of the twenty or so Jews imprisoned in the maximum security wing, Nussbaum offered his services to all of the demonstrators. It was in this spirit that the rabbi conducted the first interracial services ever held in the state of Mississippi. "When I talked to him about it in the winter of '63," recalls friend and fellow activist Ed King, "he could joke about how many Jews there were with the strangest names. Everybody, whether their name was Kelly or MacDougall, had suddenly become Jewish."[49]

Grateful as they were for his counsel and the creature comforts that he gave them, the imprisoned Freedom Riders had another reason to be glad of the rabbi's visits. Nussbaum volunteered to contact concerned friends and relatives to offer his reassurances that the prisoners were all right. "I have just returned from my weekly visit to Parchman," wrote Nussbaum in a letter circulated on August 24. "I found them all without exception in good spirits." To those who wondered exactly when their loved ones would be released, he offered these words of encouragement: "Several asked me to emphasize that if they don't get out 'exactly' as scheduled, not to worry—they'll be out."[50]

For those distressed parents anxiously awaiting any information, Nussbaum's letters were a source of enormous comfort. Many of the demonstrators were, after all, a long way from home. Dan Stevens had left his family home in Saginaw, Michigan, to join the Freedom Rides. "When my mother first heard from you," he informed Nussbaum after his release, "she had not

heard from me since my transfer to Parchman and knew of the transfer only through a few brief words I was able to write on the envelope of the letter I left with the Jackson Police on my way out of the station. She was quite worried about me, and your letters did much to reassure her." The letter was just one of dozens that Nussbaum received. All echoed the sentiments expressed by Dr. H. D. Prensky, whose daughter Cathy had been imprisoned in Parchman. "Thank you so much," he wrote. "You can't imagine what an effect your kind, warm communication had on me. Let me just tell you that I had to leave my operating room and remain alone in another room before I felt sufficiently in control of myself to be able to face my patients and staff again."[51]

Nussbaum paid his last visit to Parchman at the end of August. The experience had left him physically and emotionally exhausted, and he was sorely in need of an opportunity to restore his sapped energies. By the beginning of September, most of the Freedom Riders had agreed to post appeal bond rather than serve their full four-and-a-half-month sentences. Nussbaum was nevertheless determined that those demonstrators still imprisoned in the state penitentiary not be forgotten. To this end he organized a meeting of Mississippi rabbis at his home in late August. In writing to his associates, Nussbaum offered each the gentle reminder that "I think none of you is more than a half-hour's ride from Parchman."

No meeting was ever held. Nussbaum did eventually find in Rabbi Irwin Schar of Clarksdale someone who would relieve him of his arduous burden. Yet this was only after a heated exchange of opinion with his other colleagues across the state. Many wrote back, refusing any involvement with the Freedom Riders. First to reply was Rabbi Allan Schwartzman, who served as spiritual leader of the Hebrew Union Congregation in Greenville. Schwartzman was an especially timid supporter of civil rights. Although he quietly endorsed the Mississippi Council on Human Relations, for instance, he refused to become an actual member. His desire to avoid any association with radical northern activists was therefore no surprise. Were local rabbis to involve themselves in the Freedom Rides, Schwartzman wondered whether they "would not be harming our people, our positions . . . in our communities, and the good work that we are doing in the racial problems of Mississippi." Similar sentiments were expressed by Rabbi Moses Landau of Cleveland, who was even more fearful and therefore more forceful in his criticism of Nussbaum. "Hundreds of our families live isolated, two or three in a community, in an emotionally charged atmosphere. It is your privilege to be a martyr. . . .

There are dozens of vacant pulpits. You can pick yourself up within 24 hours and leave. Can you say the same thing of the about 1,000 Jewish families in the State?"[52]

What both Schwartzman and Landau were willing to agree to was the establishment at Parchman of a permanent Jewish chaplaincy. An official appointment would, in their opinion, defuse the controversy caused by Nussbaum's clandestine visits. Nussbaum himself agreed and wrote to the superintendent of Parchman, Fred Jones, in October, indicating that Schwartzman had volunteered his services as prison chaplain. The proposal does not appear to have been accepted, however.[53]

Perry Nussbaum chose to support the Freedom Riders despite his opposition to their tactics. Not only did his acts of compassion receive no public acknowledgement but he had to suffer the scorn and indifference of other rabbis. Northern Jews angrily criticized southern rabbis for their apparent acquiescence with segregation. That public silence in truth provided the necessary protection for private activism.

"GO BACK TO BROOKLYN"

The caution with which the rabbis initially responded to the desegregation crisis was determined to some extent by their own ideological convictions. Leonard Rogoff aptly describes southern rabbis as "establishment liberals" who sought to work within the existing political process rather than risk acts of civil disobedience. With the exception of Emmet Frank and Elijah Palnick, the rabbis were all middle-aged men. They were consequently less sanguine than student demonstrators about the threat of retaliatory violence.

Yet neither age nor ideology entirely explains their circumspection. As the civil rights struggle intensified, segregationists engaged in brutal acts of retribution against those whom they believed had betrayed the southern cause. Anti-Semitic extremists exploited the racial crisis to launch a campaign of hatred and terror against the Jewish community. No individual within that community was a more immediately identifiable target than the rabbi.

Some of the rabbis were more vulnerable to retaliatory action than others. That Mississippi rabbis such as Charles Mantinband and Perry Nussbaum should have stirred the animus of segregationists is not surprising given the virulence of white racism in that state. Yet none of the rabbis were immune to

attack, not even Jacob Rothschild in the relatively cosmopolitan city of Atlanta. Throughout the South those rabbis who dared speak out in support of desegregation were made to suffer hate mail, surveillance, and obscene telephone calls. Most distressing of all were the terrorist attacks on their synagogues and homes. That the rabbis should have struggled on in their lonely crusade against segregation is a tribute to their remarkable bravery.

Nothing could have more strikingly reminded Jacob Rothschild of the strength of anti-Semitic prejudice than the bombing of his own synagogue. In the months leading up to the attack, there had been ominous indications that anti-Semites were on the offensive. In July 1958, a small group of protesters had stood outside the offices of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* bearing placards with the inscription "Free America from Jewish Domination." The attack on the Reform Temple three months later was intended to shock Rothschild and his congregation into silence on the civil rights issue. Ironically the outpouring of public sympathy helped to reassure Atlanta Jews of their security within the wider community. Stating that Atlanta was still the "most civilized city in the South," Rothschild renewed his commitment to the civil rights cause. In no other southern city would a rabbi have felt so secure that he could draw an explicit parallel between Jim Crow segregation and the Nazi persecution of Jews. Although Rothschild did receive hate mail, it was never as forceful or as frequent as that sent to other southern rabbis.[54]

Compared with his rabbinical colleagues in other parts of the region, Jacob Rothschild led a charmed existence. Especially in the Deep South, those rabbis who dared to support desegregation endured constant recrimination. Allen Krause concluded his analysis of the southern rabbinate with a call for stronger action on civil rights. Reflecting on the same issue thirty years later, historian Marc Dollinger criticized southern rabbis for having allowed themselves to be frightened into silence on the civil rights issue. It is true that some rabbis were so intimidated that they refused to speak out in support of desegregation, even though they thought it morally right. Yet Dollinger has arguably underestimated the dangers to which the rabbis were exposed. It is disheartening though not especially surprising to learn of the experiences of rabbis in the small towns of the Deep South, men like Martin Hinchin of Alexandria, Louisiana, who refused to address the race issue publicly for fear that he would be ousted from his pulpit.[55] What is perhaps more remarkable is the strength of will shown by those rabbis who did continue to campaign

in support of black civil rights despite the often brutal retaliation of outraged segregationists.

Julian Feibelman had received "expressions of resistance" before he ever uttered a public word about the integration issue. When news of his confrontation with the school board was splashed across the front page of the *Times-Picayune* the following morning, the reaction was therefore inevitable. School board president Clarence Scheps wrote personally to Feibelman, complaining that the petition was a "grossly unfair attack." Should the rabbi care to examine the record more closely, he would realize that this school board, "more than any other group in New Orleans," had "worked harder" and "endured greater sacrifices in its endeavor to achieve for the Negro child an equal break in educational opportunities." The board, however, had an obligation to obey not only the Supreme Court but also the state legislature. Time was needed if the conflict between the two was to be resolved "in an honorable, legal, and ethical way." Scheps signed off with the request that both sides in the dispute should be patient.[56]

The tone adopted by the school board president was essentially defensive. Not so the other communications that the rabbi received. Before dawn, Feibelman was awakened by the telephone. It did not stop ringing all day, or the day after that. Eventually it became such a nuisance that the rabbi was forced to change his telephone number. His accusers, however, still had an address to write to. Four days after his encounter with the school board, Feibelman admitted to one member of his congregation, "I have been visited with more vicious abuse, threats, and promises of violence and condemnation than I have ever received in my life."[57]

Many of the attacks were characterized by their virulent anti-Semitism. Someone who signed himself "Old S.S. Trooper" observed, "Social concepts change like styles. You and yours are in vogue now. In times to come only the style will be you and yours used as soap. So get out your petitions. We'll burn you with them later. If Hitler had cause to crucify you, we'll have greater cause. Help the negro all you wish, your digging your races grave [*sic*]." Feibelman might have been able to shrug off the letter as the work of a semiliterate crank if he had not received others expressing exactly the same sentiments. One affirmed the threat in stark capitals: "HE WHO WILL NOT HEED HISTORY MUST SEE HISTORY REPEAT."[58]

Nothing ever came of these threats. Rotten eggs and tomatoes were twice thrown at Feibelman's front door, but there was never any trace of dynamite. Fear of assassination nonetheless led to a tightening of personal security

around the rabbi. His family refused to let him out alone at night. During the Rosh Hashanah service in 1956, an armed police officer stood guard inside Temple Sinai. Only after several months did tensions die down.[59]

Emmet Frank, too, had reason to fear his foolhardiness in speaking out against Senator Byrd. Extracts from his sermon were flashed out over the wire services. As word spread, his office was soon flooded with abusive phone calls and letters. "A real Virginian" wrote, "Why don't you, your nigger loving Jews, and your synagogue get out of Virginia or keep your big mouth shut—go back to Brooklyn or wherever you came from." Frank, a Texan, must have read the letter with bitter irony.[60]

What really worried the rabbi was that his enemies might be willing to strike down others simply to dispose of him. Frank had been asked before his outburst to conduct the Sunday morning service at the local Unitarian church. Although the invitation was not cancelled, the service itself had to be abandoned. Worshippers were already settled in their seats when an anonymous call came, warning that an explosive device had been concealed within the building and was about to be detonated. Immediately, 220 adults and 200 children were evacuated. To everyone's relief, the call proved to be a hoax.[61]

Nowhere was the situation more dire for southern liberals than in the state of Mississippi. As James Silver so aptly put it, Mississippi was a "closed society" determined to withstand the forces of racial liberalism sweeping the nation. As active campaigners in support of civil rights, Charles Mantinband and Perry Nussbaum were confronted with the double bind of political intolerance and anti-Semitic prejudice.

Mantinband for his part soon attracted the attentions of the local authorities, who closely watched his every movement. Someone sat round the clock at the bus stop opposite the rabbi's home, monitoring his comings and goings. His mail had invariably been opened by the time he arrived at the post office to collect it. Mantinband's wife, Anna, remembered how the watcher at the bus stop once followed her onto the bus and seated himself right beside her, even though the bus was only half full. "I see the reverend is taking a trip," he said immediately. "I seed him get into a car with a New York license yesterday. I got a little book; I know every move the reverend makes." The threat of personal danger obliged Mantinband himself to act always with the utmost caution. Whenever the rabbi passed any of his black friends on the street, he stared straight ahead, for fear that even the most casual nod might raise suspicion against him.[62]

No southern rabbi suffered more than Perry Nussbaum. Around 10:30 P.M. on September 18, an explosion tore through Temple Beth Israel, waking neighbors several streets away. The new building had been dedicated only six months earlier. Rabbi Nussbaum had written to friends of the "thrilling prospect of moving into our long dreamed of new Synagogue." Now that dream lay in partial ruin. The bomb, which had been concealed close to the rabbi's study, caused damage estimated at $25,000. Rabbi Nussbaum and his wife, Arene, stood huddled in the darkness, surrounded by onlookers, shocked but stubbornly resolved not to be intimidated by the attack.[63]

That resolve would be severely tested only eight weeks later, on the night of November 21. The Nussbaums had already retired to their separate rooms when the car pulled slowly up to the pavement outside their house. Across the lawn stepped the driver, who deposited a small box under the outside air conditioning unit. No sooner had the car drawn off into the night than the bomb blast brought the bedroom ceilings crashing down. Rabbi Nussbaum staggered out into the hallway where he was confronted by the hysterical cries of his wife.[64]

Both attacks elicited a swift and overwhelmingly sympathetic response from officials and ordinary citizens alike. Four days after the synagogue bombing, forty ministers from the Greater Jackson Clergy Alliance marched through Jackson as an act of penance for their failure, in the words of Rev. Thomas E. Tiller Jr., to prevent "the kind of climate that this sort of thing can happen in." Political leaders from across the state also joined in publicly denouncing the perpetrators. More practically, J. Edgar Hoover dispatched a team of FBI demolition experts to investigate the synagogue attack. Mayor Allen Thompson also established a reward fund for the arrest and conviction of the culprits. Public donations soon swelled the fund from $5,000 to $25,000.[65]

Despite these expressions of support, Nussbaum was badly shaken by the attacks. There are those in the congregation who argue that the rabbi simply resolved to carry on the struggle. As Lil Burnstein recalls, "He could not be intimidated. He just kept on doing." To some extent this was true. Nussbaum did not suddenly renege on his commitments to the civil rights movement. He did not resign from any of the various civil rights organizations to which he belonged. Nonetheless, the bombing forced Nussbaum to consider his own position. After the first attack he had been placed under police protection, although this was discontinued on November 1. After the second attack he and his wife were hidden, and not even the congregation knew their whereabouts. To Rabbi Abraham Feldman he confessed, "For her sake [his

wife] and mine, since there is no guarantee that this will not recur, I have been doing my best to reduce public exposure." It was an indication that his most active days were over.[66]

Collectively the experiences of the southern rabbis reveal the stark dangers that confronted southern liberals during the desegregation crisis. By understanding the political context in which they operated, it is perhaps easier to see why some of their rabbinical colleagues opted for silence on the civil rights issue. Above all, it reveals the unusual bravery of these embattled individuals.

Yet the threat of retaliation came not only from the wider communities in which the rabbis labored but also from within the ranks of their own congregations. Although their actions identified all southern Jews with the civil rights cause, the rabbis did not always represent the racial politics of their congregations. On the contrary, many congregations attempted to prevent their rabbi from taking any public stance on the race issue for fear that it would inflame anti-Semitic prejudice. As Marc Dollinger rightly asserts, "Rabbinic attitudes about the civil rights movement tested the relative strength of traditional Jewish values against the realities of southern living."[67] Ultimately what remains to be asked is who best represents the reaction of southern Jews to the desegregation crisis: the fearless rabbis or their frightened congregations?

FREEDOM OF THE PULPIT

"I want to take this means of congratulating you on your forthright and courageous stand," Ruth Berlinsky enthusiastically informed Rabbi Jacob Rothschild. "There is hope for the Southland and American principles of democracy and justice for all when spiritual leaders such as you lead the way." Such sentiments were typical of the correspondence the rabbi received from members of his congregation during the desegregation crisis. In effect, the individual expressions of support that arrived on his desk amounted to a collective endorsement.[68]

Rothschild's activism was admittedly a source of friction. Some were scared that the rabbi would stir up a storm of anti-Semitic prejudice. Others, especially among the older members, were opposed to the idea of integration per se.[69] The dissenters were nonetheless too small in number to force an open confrontation with Rothschild. Even the attack on the Reform Temple in October 1958 only served to strengthen the rabbi's position. As has already been argued, the attack not only failed to undermine the security of the congrega-

tion but paradoxically succeeded in strengthening it. As Atlantans recoiled in horror at the incident, so an atmosphere of increased tolerance and understanding began to settle over the city. Once the anxieties of his congregation had eased, Rothschild was able to speak out with renewed vigor on the issue of civil rights. The publication of an article he had written in support of greater racial understanding elicited almost no response from members of the Reform Temple. "Either the *Southern Israelite* doesn't have much of a circulation," mused Rothschild, "or our people are getting used to hearing me say things like this or they're changing enough so that it doesn't make much difference to them any more."[70]

In comparison with most other southern communities, Atlanta was unusually progressive. The members of the Reform Temple were less concerned than many other southern Jews that the actions of their rabbi would isolate them from the larger white community. As a result, they were more willing to endorse his position on civil rights. Elsewhere the determined stand taken by rabbis in support of desegregation caused considerable tensions between themselves and their congregations. The integration crisis created a profound moral dilemma for southern Jews. Most shared the conviction that integration was morally right. Among themselves they acknowledged that the rabbis were following the biblical command to fight for social justice. Although privately they supported the principle of desegregation, publicly they were too scared to speak out. The conspicuous involvement of southern rabbis in the civil rights conflict threatened the peaceful coexistence between Jews and Gentiles. In a desperate act of self-preservation, congregations therefore conspired to silence their own spiritual leaders.

For the greater number of Jews in New Orleans, life was one of privilege and prosperity. In 1958, their median family income was estimated at over $10,000 a year, a figure more than twice that of the average American household. No matter how great their financial gains, the Jews of New Orleans had nonetheless ended up paying a profound price. "More so perhaps than in most other American Jewish communities," observed the sociologist Leonard Reissman, "New Orleans appears to give substance to the fears of benign assimilation that have always dominated Jewish history." Intermarriage was as much the rule as the exception. Religious observance and understanding were at a minimum, especially among the three out of every five Jews who were members of the wealthier Reform congregations.[71]

The social adjustment which New Orleans Jews underwent included at least an outward acceptance of prevailing attitudes about race. Should their fellow

citizens sniff even the faintest scent of support for integration, it would threaten every advance they had made. In July 1954, the advisory board of the local Anti-Defamation League issued a statement of support for the *Brown* decision, which it believed to be "consistent not only with the American tradition of human equality . . . but also with the Judeo-Christian concept of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God." Otherwise there was silence. The dilemma which Jews experienced was illustrated by George Chaplin, Jewish editor of the *New Orleans States-Item*. "I have wept before in my life," Chaplin wrote to Feibelman after learning of his encounter with the school board, "but rarely from sheer pride in a man." Although privately elated, Chaplin confessed that as a public figure it would be impossible for him to share his opinions openly. The editors of the locally published *Jewish Ledger* no doubt felt likewise. At no time did they offer an opinion about the race issue. As tensions increased, it became increasingly dangerous to do so. Anti-Semitic hate sheets such as *Common Sense* were circulated by the thousands throughout the city. Citizens' Council president Leander Perez spoke openly of a Zionist plot against the United States.[72]

When the school crisis shook the city, it was inevitable that Jews should be deeply divided over what action, if any, they should take. Tulane University student John Charles Rosen sought the opinion of twenty-one local Jewish leaders about the civil rights struggle. Only one openly endorsed segregation. Six others expressed their sympathy for African Americans but insisted that Jews should not get involved. Another four argued that Jews should openly campaign to keep the schools open. Another ten agreed that Jews had a responsibility to support integration, but believed that they should refrain from any overt involvement for fear that their actions would be interpreted as a conspiracy between one minority group and another.[73]

Every week after the Friday service, worshippers would flock to the pulpit, some to praise Feibelman on his sermon, but others to plead with him "not to go out on a limb." The rabbi also received a flurry of letters and phone calls, complaining that he had acted irresponsibly. As a distressed David Levy wrote: "When you make these utterances publicly I feel that as a member of your faith and congregation, whether it should be that way or not, I will be injured."[74]

The problem that Feibelman faced was that most of his congregation were essentially conservative in their attitudes toward integration. As he later admitted, many of them would have continued to support the status quo "unquestionably," even if they experienced no sense of personal danger. Yet

unlike some of his colleagues, Feibelman escaped any serious reprimand. Only one member of the synagogue ever resigned over his involvement in the race issue. The board of trustees never called an emergency meeting or tried to censor him. For this Feibelman had reason to be thankful to a small group of level-headed and liberal-minded individuals in the congregation. It was their influence which enabled him to weather the storm. As he put it, "I took my strength from the few who stood by me."[75]

The social condition of Jackson's Jewish community closely resembled that of their coreligionists in New Orleans and Memphis. Congregation Beth Israel had been formally established in 1860. One hundred years later, Jews remained the most inconspicuous of minorities. Their number reached only four hundred in a city of one hundred and fifty thousand. Since their numbers never posed any palpable threat, they had swiftly become absorbed into the mainstream culture of the city. This is illustrated by the following anecdote from Ed King, erstwhile chaplain of Tougaloo College. As the centerpiece of its centennial celebrations, the congregation held a grand banquet, to which it invited Governor Ross Barnett as guest speaker. Standing before the assembled audience, Barnett began his address: "Fellow Christians, I'm so glad to help you celebrate." As King argues, even if the story is apocryphal, it still holds certain truths about the Jewish community in Jackson. So successfully had the congregation blurred the distinctions between themselves and other whites that Nussbaum once received a letter from a local Christian "wanting to know if the Jewish Church in the Holy Land is Protestant or Roman Catholic."[76]

Undoubtedly, there were many among the congregation who worried that Perry Nussbaum's involvement in civil rights would ruin their good relations with the larger white community. The mounting opposition to Nussbaum was nonetheless motivated by more than just fear. In February 1958, Philip M. Klutznick, international president of B'nai B'rith, informed a meeting of the Milwaukee Jewish Welfare Fund that throughout the American South "a kind of segregation of the Jewish community is taking place." Southern Jews were being singled out for retaliatory action by ardent segregationists, outraged at the interference of the national defense agencies in the race issue. Rabbi Nussbaum was appalled by these remarks. The idea, he argued, that southern Jews deserved the sympathy and understanding of their northern coreligionists was "ridiculous." "There's no such pressure in Mississippi," asserted Nussbaum. "The position of the Jew here is as good as it ever was." This statement was to some extent confirmed by a confidential report written by ADL represen-

tative Irwin Schulman. A fact-finding mission to Jackson had revealed that the Jewish community there was "concerned, but not scared" about the growth of anti-Semitism.[77]

The longer Jews lived in the city, the less distinctive their own cultural identity became and the more sharply they resembled the mirror image of those around them. They shared the same pride in their city as white Gentiles, the same political convictions, and the same prejudice against African Americans. This was especially true of those families whose origins in Jackson could be traced back several generations. Scared as they were that the rabbi risked the safety of the entire congregation, they were also ideologically opposed to any change in the existing racial order. This assessment is confirmed by a number of the rabbi's old congregants, among them Elaine Crystal. When news arrived of the *Brown* decision, she recalls, "Some of the older families saw it as Doomsday."[78]

Nussbaum had long recognized the need to avoid any media attention if his civil rights activities were not to risk violent retaliation against the congregation. He had, for instance, insisted that his visits to the incarcerated Freedom Riders involve "no publicity and no contact with CORE or NAACP." Despite his efforts to avoid detection, Nussbaum alarmed many of his congregation. Attempts were twice made to remove the rabbi. Several of the wealthier members of the synagogue threatened to withdraw their annual donations unless Nussbaum refrained from further involvement in the civil rights issue. Only the intervention of a few influential supporters within the congregation saved Nussbaum.

Rabbi Frank survived the bomb scare at Arlington Unitarian Church, only to be sent reeling by an explosion of anger from his own congregation. A desperate board of trustees demanded that he not only apologize to Senator Byrd but praise him on his massive resistance program. Frank was furious. His sermon the following Friday condemned the congregation for failing to honor their responsibilities. As he put it, any Jew "who remains silent in the face of prejudice leveled at another group of God's children is traitorous to the basic principle of Judaism." Rather than turn his congregation around, however, Frank only turned them away. Some walked out in disgust, never to return.[79]

Frank was further accused of endangering Jews not only in Alexandria but across the entire South. "Has the Negro ever gone out on a limb for the Jew?" asked an indignant Mrs. Levet of Richmond. Shunning Frank's contention that Jews had a responsibility to assist other oppressed minorities, she contin-

ued: "There is so much both inside and outside the Synagogue that needs to be done, so why don't we just concentrate on our own problems for a stronger Jewish UNITY." David Glil of Florida argued that the rabbi should take responsibility for the recent bombing of the Reform Temple in Atlanta. Speeches like Frank's only provoked prejudice against Jews, creating a climate in which anti-Semitic extremists could act with impunity. "Do you realize," raged Glil, "if we had no Jews like you in our midst, no Synagogue would have ever be[en] bombed?"[80]

Despite the indignities and isolation that he suffered, Frank would eventually win a reprieve. Once again what proved vital was the influence of a small but spirited faction within the congregation. Frank had particular reason to thank Leroy Bendheim, who remained loyal throughout the crisis. As president of Temple Beth-El and mayor of Alexandria, Bendheim exerted a unique authority over the congregation. Perhaps more important still were the eleven Protestant ministers who agreed to support Frank. It was they who eased tensions in the wider community, encouraging the board of trustees at Temple Beth-El to cancel an emergency meeting about the rabbi's future. Leaders from various Jewish communities in northern Virginia also assembled for a special meeting in Arlington, at which it was eventually agreed to reaffirm the "freedom of the pulpit." And so Frank survived. Five and a half years later, in March 1964, the board agreed unanimously to award him tenure.[81]

Despite the sustained criticism they received from their congregations, Perry Nussbaum and Emmet Frank managed to maintain their hold on the pulpit. In other instances, however, the pressure against activist rabbis proved insurmountable.

In an address to a rabbinical audience delivered some years after the integration crisis, Ira Sanders proclaimed that he had been able to operate "with practically no one in the congregation protesting." Ironically enough, it was two hundred miles away, in Alexandria, Louisiana, that a rabbi would be dismissed for speaking out against Orval Faubus. Joel Dobin had aggravated the congregation of Temple Gemiluth Chassadim by expressing his support for Israel, installing a kosher kitchen, and generally acting in a manner many found "too Jewish." Nonetheless, it was not until he publicly suggested that Eisenhower had "no alternative" but to bring the troops into Little Rock that he was asked to leave. Dobin had deliberately refrained from voicing his support for integration, restricting himself to the observation that the federal government had "to preserve its authority in the face of military action taken against it." Nonetheless, he was heckled throughout the ser-

mon. When he left Alexandria, Dobin had been with the temple only six months.[82]

It was, however, in Hattiesburg that the rabbi was most forcibly restrained from further involvement in the civil rights struggle. Within the space of two years, congregation B'nai Israel forced out both Charles Mantinband and his successor, David Ben-Ami.

Fear of violent reprisals, both real and imagined, resulted in repeated efforts by the congregation to censure Charles Mantinband whenever he involved himself in the race issue. Mantinband found his authority challenged, his activism criticized, and his opinions censored. "Grudgingly, they concede that my position is morally correct and consistent with the noblest teachings of Judaism," recorded Mantinband in his diary. That did not prevent him from seeking legal advice about the security of his job, despite the fact that he had been granted tenure.[83]

Eventually, however, the pressure became more than Mantinband could bear. When the rabbi was offered a new congregation in Longview, Texas, he did not hesitate long before handing in his resignation notice. "They made it so miserable for him," asserts temple member Esther Shemper, "that I think actually in a way they did ask him to leave."[84]

When David Ben-Ami arrived in Hattiesburg, he quickly assumed his predecessor's mantle as a civil rights activist. On the morning of January 22, 1964, the calm of downtown Hattiesburg was disturbed by a demonstration outside the Forrest County Courthouse. A small band of northern clergymen had converged there in protest at the refusal of local authorities to register African American voters.[85]

Demonstrations continued for a week without serious incident. Then on January 29 one of the ministers stepped across the police barricade and stood defiantly on the steps of the courthouse. Eight of the other clergymen immediately followed him. All nine were then arrested. Refusing to post bond, the clergymen awaited their court hearing from inside a prison cell. On Monday, February 3, they were brought before City Judge Mildred Norris, who issued each of them a $200 fine and four-month jail sentence.[86]

Within the local Jewish community there was little support for the demonstrations. This owed much to the involvement of several representatives from the Rabbinical Assembly of America. Their arrival threatened to associate all Jews with racial agitation, a prospect which panicked members of B'nai Israel. This was especially true when Rabbis Andre Unger and Jerome Lipnick announced their intention to attend services at the temple. "There had been

a threat," remarked Lipnick, "that if any of us did appear to worship on the Sabbath the service might be cancelled." Nonetheless, when the rabbis turned up at the temple on Friday night, they were reluctantly invited in.[87]

Rabbi Ben-Ami did not share the apprehensions of his congregation. As an act of solidarity he decided instead to visit the incarcerated clergymen. No sooner had he left their cell, however, than the irate local sheriff was on the phone to one of B'nai Israel's board members. According to Rabbi Morris Margolies, who had traveled from Kansas City to join the demonstrations: "The riot act was read to the rabbi: 'Thou shalt not visit agitators—clerical or otherwise—who have come to disturb the equanimity of our community!'"[88]

Ben-Ami chose to ignore the protests of his congregation. Before long he had befriended another northern clergyman, a Presbyterian minister named Robert Beech. Acting as a representative of the National Council of Churches, Beech had established a ministry in a building on Mobile Street that he shared with the local NAACP. Outraged at such effrontery, the white community had completely ostracized him. Refused membership in any church and forced to educate his son at home, Beech had suffered the further indignity of being beaten up by an angry storekeeper. Although it had not referred to Beech by name, the *Hattiesburg American* had also publicly condemned the National Council of Churches. The Council, claimed the paper, had installed itself as the unappointed moral guardian of American society, its intention being "to conduct a social revolution, preach a social gospel and take an active part in national and international affairs."[89]

When Ben-Ami refused to obey the instructions of his board and fraternized with such a controversial figure as Beech, a second showdown with the congregation was inevitable. What transpired at that encounter is not entirely certain. According to journalist Harry Golden, Hattiesburg's Jewish merchants had feared that the rabbi would ruin their "substantial investments" in the city, and they had forced him to resign. Ben-Ami himself offered another version of events. He insisted he had not been ousted. He had agreed to go. As he put it: "Since my presence here as a 'witness' laboring in the prophetic tradition, and therefore not being able to assume a 'hands-off' and neutral position in the struggle for civil rights, placed the Jewish community in an uncomfortable and threatened position, we thought it best to part ways, as soon as I was able to effect other satisfactory arrangements." Whatever the truth, one thing remained clear. Within less than twenty-four months, Temple B'nai Israel had managed to lose two rabbis.[90]

Even though his days in Hattiesburg were almost at an end, Ben-Ami had nonetheless only just begun to cause trouble for his congregation. In December 1964, a scheme was announced at a rally in Chicago to distribute twenty thousand Christmas turkeys to the most impoverished citizens of Mississippi, a majority of whom were African American. The project was conceived by black entertainers Dick Gregory and Sammy Davis Jr. and white newspaper columnist Drew Pearson. Active support was received from across the racial and religious divide, including the Catholic Church, the Choctaw Indian Agency, and the Salvation Army. It was not long, however, before things started to go wrong.[91]

White Mississippians were incensed by the idea of Dick Gregory and Sammy Davis acting like black Saint Nicholases. The Citizens' Council in Ruleville suggested retaliatory action. In the opinion of one of its spokesmen, it was patently absurd for the project organizers to send the turkeys "to another state in which they know absolutely nothing of the problems, when right in the city where the rally was held, there are countless thousands of hungry Negroes who will not have enough food, much less a turkey, this Christmas day." Sarcastically, he suggested that the Council would send a Christmas present of its own to the starving black population of Chicago: two possums and a sack of potatoes. The backlash also burst forth from the pages of the *Hattiesburg American*. In an editorial entitled "Stop Pickin' on Mississippi," the paper accused the turkey distributors of hypocrisy. "It would be an interesting experiment in psychiatry," hypothesized the editorial writer, "to choose a random sample of 100 Negroes from Leflore and Tallahatchie Counties, and 100 Negroes from the Chicago suburb of Trumbull Park, and to measure both their psyches and their hunger. Life doubtless is something short of paradise down along the Yazoo River. How are things in south Chicago?"[92]

In the face of such strident opposition, the Salvation Army suddenly decided to withdraw from the project. Since it was supposed to distribute the food, this created an administrative nightmare. It was left to a small band of volunteers, among them Rabbi Ben-Ami. As Christmas drew ever nearer, the volunteers were left to soldier on in the face of a smear campaign launched by the local media. Hattiesburg's Jews despaired that Ben-Ami was dragging their reputation through the mud. "Why," exclaimed the rabbi, "some members of the congregation were so upset that I had to have the Salvation Army's National Commander, General Holland French, in New York wire the board to assure them that I was not a subversive character."[93]

Ultimately it mattered little. By late January 1965, Rabbi Ben-Ami had already left Hattiesburg. Immediately afterwards he became a member of the Mississippi State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, an organization which investigated the issue of voter registration. Later he was offered a sixty-day consultancy with the U.S. Department of Education's Office on Poverty. After that, however, he became increasingly hard to trace. The last recorded sighting of him was in Washington, D.C., where he joined demonstrations against the Vietnam War. At that point, however, the trail disappears altogether.[94]

The tensions that the desegregation crisis created between southern rabbis and their congregations raise a number of important issues. First, it is clear that southern Jews were deeply divided over how they should respond to the civil rights issue. In broad terms, that conflict pitted religious leaders against lay persons. Yet within the congregations themselves there were battles between those older and more conservative Jews who sought to challenge the authority of the rabbi and their younger and more progressive counterparts who came to his defense. A second issue concerns the significance of religious leadership. By speaking out from the pulpit in support of desegregation, rabbis sought to act as the conscience of their communities. Yet what good did their words do, given that their congregations not only refused to listen but actively attempted to get rid of the rabbi? At the very least, the rabbis served to remind their congregations of the prophetic mission of Reform Judaism and to steer them away from any more overt association with segregation. Individually the actions of the rabbis might have been of little consequence. Collectively they constituted a challenge, albeit limited, to the entrenched political conformism of the white South.

TOGETHER WE STAND

In the face of such extreme hostility, it would have been no surprise if the rabbis had accepted the futility of their struggle and abandoned their southern pulpits. Many of them, like Charles Mantinband, suffered intense feelings of isolation. As Mantinband once confessed: "There are temptations for a Rabbi to desert the scene and go into less turbulent pastures." The rabbi later acted upon such feelings and resigned.[95]

How were other rabbis able to resist such "temptations"? Above all, they needed to know that they were not alone. We have already seen that a small group of supporters within the congregation often succeeded in shielding

their spiritual leader from his critics. The rabbis also had other means of protecting themselves. The involvement of Christian ministers in the integration struggle enabled rabbis to stifle any accusation that they were instruments of a Jewish conspiracy against the white South.

Ira Sanders in particular was able to pool his efforts into a common ecumenical front against Jim Crow. Sanders seldom acted alone, involving himself instead in a coordinated campaign of action with Christian ministers. His involvement in the Ministry of Reconciliation and the Greater Little Rock Conference on Religion and Human Relations illustrates this. So too does the fact that he was only one of several clergymen who stood before the Arkansas legislature to express their opposition against the sovereignty bills. Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and Presbyterians were all represented that night. Although he was able to deflect most criticism, Sanders did not entirely escape danger. The threatened bombing of B'nai Israel offers a striking example. When the Ministry of Reconciliation announced plans for special Columbus Day services in October 1957, a group of Baptist ministers expressed opposition on the grounds that "Jews do not believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ." Despite this, Rabbi Sanders was able to shield his congregation and therefore act with relative impunity.[96]

Yet others were less fortunate. To the intense frustration of Jacob Rothschild, the Atlanta ministry long resisted any involvement in the integration struggle. In November 1957, eighty white ministers signed their names to what became known as the Atlanta Manifesto. The document called on local authorities to abide by certain principles such as an obligation to obey the law and a commitment to preserve the public school system. Anxious to avoid any serious controversy, however, the ministers had themselves insisted that they were opposed to the "amalgamation of the races." Although Rothschild was among those who signed the Manifesto, it did not accurately reflect his own opinion. It was only the following year that a more forceful statement was forthcoming. On this occasion, some 312 ministers representing sixteen denominations encouraged the citizens of Atlanta to "face up to the fact, that under the ruling of the Supreme Court made in discharge of its constitutional authority, enforced segregation in the public schools is now without support in and contrary to national law." Although the Atlanta clergy appeared more willing to mobilize themselves in support of the Supreme Court, this was largely confined to rhetoric.[97]

Rabbi Rothschild was almost alone in his decision to take more direct action. His one real ally was Catholic archbishop Paul Hallinan. Together the

two men tried and failed to involve ministers in an action project designed to improve the living and working conditions of African Americans in the city. Along with Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution,* they were also responsible for arranging a dinner to honor Martin Luther King for his award of the 1964 Nobel peace prize. Although the prominent involvement of a Jew and a Catholic in the organization of the event was bound to provoke controversy, there was little alternative. No Protestant minister would agree to be associated so publicly with the civil rights leader. Despite the opposition of many city leaders, the dinner was a great success. Thirteen hundred people turned up at the Dinkler Plaza Hotel on the night of January 27, 1965, five hundred more than were expected. Ralph McGill was refused permission to speak by his newspaper. That responsibility was therefore left to Hallinan and Rothschild. "Your words," King later wrote privately to the rabbi, "were both eloquent and moving and I shall treasure them amongst the storehouse of memories as a light of encouragement for the many dark and desolate days of struggle which are before us."[98]

In seeking the support of their fellow clergymen, few rabbis suffered more disappointment than Perry Nussbaum. Had the clergy in Jackson condemned segregation, it might have created a climate of opinion in which there could at least occur rational debate of the race issue. According to Nussbaum, "The best way to break down the barriers in Mississippi is to concentrate on those elements which set the moral standards and behavior of the people, that is, the churches."[99]

Nussbaum was unable to secure the support he so desperately needed. It was with fear and frustration that he wrote of the "silent acquiescence" of certain clergy and the active complicity of others. The clergy in Jackson assiduously avoided any collective action in support of the Supreme Court decision. Those ministers who defiantly took a stand did so alone and paid the inevitable consequence. Many were forced to resign. One was even shot. No wonder then that other clergymen should decide that "silent acquiescence" was their only stratagem for survival. Anxious not to be singled out, Nussbaum kept a similarly low profile. "He was not making public pronouncements in the 1950s," asserts civil rights activist Ed King. "Nobody was."[100]

Without local allies, rabbis like Perry Nussbaum languished in a state of fear and loneliness. What sustained their spirits ultimately was the long-distance support they received from other rabbis who shared the same predicament.

No mutual support network was ever formally established. Perry Nussbaum

did write to Jacob Rothschild in October 1963, encouraging him to take the initiative in organizing a rabbinical "Dialogue" on the subject of civil rights. To assure cautious colleagues, Nussbaum suggested that there be no publicity and no official support from any Jewish organization. Rothschild welcomed the idea, suggesting an informal get-together at a forthcoming convention in Chicago. Nussbaum duly distributed a circular, inviting a select few to share breakfast at the Conrad Hilton Hotel on Monday, November 18.[101]

Who went and what was said are unknown. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that southern rabbis ever adopted a coherent strategy on civil rights. Discussions did take place at different levels. For instance, integration was listed on the agenda at several meetings of the Southwest Conference of American Rabbis, an organization which drew its membership from the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Oklahoma. "Of course we talked," affirms former president Elijah Palnick. But there is no actual record of what was said at such meetings. What we do know, however, is that there existed an informal exchange of ideas and experiences among individual rabbis. When the local community and even their own congregations turned against them, rabbis drew comfort from the sympathetic words of those colleagues who had struggled through similar crises. New friendships were forged, and older ones were fortified. Elijah Palnick had known Jacob Rothschild since the two worked together at summer camp in the early 1950s. They kept each other abreast of developments in their own communities during the desegregation struggle. Palnick also struck up a solid relationship with fellow Canadian Perry Nussbaum, providing his troubled colleague with a sympathetic ear.[102]

Indeed, the lines of communication often buzzed with activity. Emmet Frank, as we have seen, suffered a series of venomous attacks after speaking out against Senator Harry Byrd. The letters he received from his fellow rabbis reassured him that his was not a lone liberal voice. "This is just a line to express my prayers and good wishes in your behalf," wrote Charles Mantinband. "I hope you will find your officials in the Congregation ready to hold up your hands, for justice and free education, not to mention respect for authority, law, and order." William Silverman of Nashville offered his own words of condolence and encouragement. "Having been subjected to a great deal of pressure, vilification, and threats on this same issue, I believe I am in a position to understand the heartache and the difficulties you and your dear ones have encountered."[103]

Correspondence was inspired by other moments of crisis. When word reached Perry Nussbaum that the Reform Temple in Atlanta had been bombed, he immediately typed a letter to Jacob Rothschild, expressing his sympathy. Nine years later, it was Rothschild who wrote the words of comfort to Nussbaum. It was all too well that he knew the traumas his colleague must be experiencing after the twin bomb attacks. "I have some idea," he suggested, "of the fear and foreboding under which you must have been living during the last couple of months and I can only hope that its oppressiveness may somehow have been lifted."[104]

Throughout these tumultuous years, the two rabbis exchanged a series of letters. As those letters already quoted would suggest, theirs was a friendship forged through adversity. Nussbaum especially seems to have needed a sympathetic ear. In October 1963, for instance, he wrote a despairing account of his efforts to integrate Temple Beth Israel. After repeated bickering, the board of trustees had reluctantly agreed in June to open the doors of the synagogue to "all peoples." A triumphant Nussbaum had eagerly awaited the arrival of the first African Americans. Summer had long since faded to autumn, however, and no one had appeared. "A couple of days ago," protested Nussbaum, "I learned that . . . they have not come to the Temple because they were told to stay away! Now I wonder if my Board's acquiescence to my recommendation was just a cover for their own behind-the-scenes approach to the Negro leadership." Without a copy of his reply, we can only speculate as to the advice Rothschild offered Nussbaum.[105]

Nonetheless, Nussbaum must have raised the issue with other rabbis, because several years later he received a letter about integrated services from Levi Olan of Dallas. A decade earlier, Olan had converted a young African American to Judaism. When he recommended that the neophyte receive membership in the congregation, he was firmly rejected. The dynamiting of the Reform Temple in Atlanta had only recently occurred, and the "leadership of the Temple was frightened because of the tense situation which the bombing had created." Six months later, after tensions had eased, the temple agreed to accept its first black congregant.[106]

Nussbaum was in regular contact with a number of rabbis. Aside from Jacob Rothschild, he also met with another isolated activist in Mississippi, Charles Mantinband. Indeed, there appears to have been a three-way line of communication between these men. The exchange of opinions about the Freedom Rides has, for instance, already been noted.[107]

Mantinband and Nussbaum had both been disappointed by the response of the Mississippi rabbinate toward the desegregation crisis. "I feel that the sins of these colleagues of mine are the sins of omission rather than commission," Mantinband once wrote to Harry Golden of the *Carolina Israelite*. "I suspect that they comfort themselves by feeling they are influential and useful behind the scenes, and play it safe and cozy." Nussbaum must have felt much the same after his struggle to mobilize support for the incarcerated Freedom Riders.[108]

Unable to rely upon their fellow rabbis for support, the two men turned to each other. Nussbaum used his letters to Mantinband as a safety valve, enabling him to vent his frustrations about his congregation without fear of retaliation. The rabbis also had the opportunity to relate their latest experiences when they attended meetings of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations. The siegelike atmosphere in which the meetings were held helped reinforce the bonds among those who attended.[109]

This was also true of the social science forums organized by Dr. Ernst Borinski at Tougaloo College, a black institution in Jackson. Borinski was a German Jewish immigrant who had fled to the United States after the Nazis invaded Austria in March 1938. He had accepted a teaching position at Tougaloo in 1947. The treatment of African Americans served as a stark reminder to Borinksi of his own struggle against the forces of oppression. Ed King, the former chaplain at Tougaloo, recalls that "he would talk to me about how similar things were to the late '20s and the '30s in Central Europe." Then, as now, Borinski would argue, the problem was that "good people" were "not getting involved."[110]

The social science forums provided an opportunity for an integrated audience to meet and socialize. Attendance at the forum, however, was not without its risks. Investigators from the State Sovereignty Commission stood outside the college gates and recorded the license numbers of anyone who came to the Wednesday night meetings. Death threats were received through the mail, over the phone, and in person. By the late 1950s, fears for personal safety had forced the suspension of the forums.[111]

The cancellation of the social science forums again attests to the danger in which Mantinband and Nussbaum placed themselves. As the letters they exchanged with each other also reveal, all of the rabbis suffered both emotional and physical scars. There developed, however, a sense of collective strength to soldier on.

"BETTER A HUNDRED NEGROES THAN A SINGLE JEW"

The achievements of men like Charles Mantinband and Perry Nussbaum appear all the more remarkable when measured against the doubt and indecision of other rabbis in similar situations. As he surveyed the experiences of his colleagues in the southern rabbinate, Mantinband came to rue the "sorry spectacles" he saw around him. The majority of southern rabbis, he informed Harry Golden, had failed to take any initiative in support of integration, arguing as they did "that they have as much chance against the tide of public opinion as a toothpick against Niagara."[112]

Among the men whom Mantinband singled out for criticism were two Alabama rabbis, Eugene Blachschleger of Montgomery and Milton Grafman of Birmingham. Blachschleger remained conspicuously silent not only at the time of the Montgomery bus boycott but throughout the entire desegregation crisis. It is Grafman who most dramatically illustrates the dilemma of the southern rabbi torn between his commitment to social reform and the dangerous political circumstances that surrounded him. Ultimately the practical necessity of safeguarding himself and his congregation caused him to retreat from any principled stand in support of black civil rights. Indeed, his caution brought him into open conflict with civil rights protesters.

Born in Brooklyn, Grafman spent his formative years in Washington, D.C. After his ordination, he initially served as the rabbi of Temple Adath Israel in Lexington, Kentucky. On December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Grafman assumed the pulpit of Temple Emanu El.[113]

During the 1950s, Birmingham had arguably the most abysmal record in race relations of any city in the Deep South. Blacks were literally beaten into submission by Public Safety Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor. Terrorist attacks against black homes and churches earned the city the unwelcome sobriquet "Bombingham."

Of the almost six hundred thousand people who lived in the city of Birmingham, only four thousand were Jewish. When the Supreme Court issued the *Brown* decision, the board of Temple Emanu El briefly considered a resolution of their own urging the compliance of local authorities. The idea was defeated, 19 to 1. Although many of the trustees welcomed the Supreme Court ruling, they were unwilling to express that support publicly. Such was also the position of the rabbi. As the battle lines between black protesters and white authorities in Birmingham were drawn, Milton Grafman observed a strict neutrality.[114]

Only once did he betray any sign of where his real sympathies lay. In February 1956, the University of Mississippi invited a number of clergymen to act as guest speakers during its Religious Emphasis Week. Interviewed in advance of his arrival by the campus newspaper, one of the clergymen, the Reverend Alvin Kershaw, had rather naively spoken of his membership in the NAACP. When university officials read the interview, they informed Kershaw that he would no longer be welcome. This so enraged the other clergymen, including Rabbi Grafman, that they withdrew their names from the guest list.[115]

Even this gesture, however, could hardly be construed as an active form of protest. Indeed, Grafman refused to involve himself in any action that might jeopardize the security of the Jewish community. Like most southern rabbis, Grafman had to contend with a congregation that, in his own words, was "reluctant to fight the pattern of racial segregation." The rabbi was unwilling to challenge their will. As Grafman later affirmed: "We, the Jewish community's leadership, believed that Jews, as such, ought to stay out of the desegregation fight on the grounds that it is a 'Christian problem' between whites and Negroes and not simply a racial problem."[116]

Grafman had good reason to be scared. The headquarters of the virulently anti-Semitic National States' Rights Party were situated on the outskirts of the city. In all probability it was they who were implicated in the attempted bombing of Birmingham's Conservative synagogue, Beth-Or. Although the dynamite planted outside the temple on April 28, 1956, failed to explode, it shook every Jew in the city to the core. Some months later, Grafman himself was awakened by an anonymous telephone caller who threatened to attack Temple Emanu El. Although nothing came of the call, it set the Jewish community even further on edge.[117]

No matter how legitimate his fears may have been, the vehemence with which Grafman defended his position disturbed many of his fellow Jews. At one regional meeting of the Anti-Defamation League, the rabbi was rebuked by other members for his remark, "Better a hundred Negroes be hurt than that harm come to the head of a single Jew."[118]

Grafman would become increasingly accustomed to criticism in the months and years that followed. In April 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) launched a direct action campaign in the downtown business district of Birmingham. The timing of the demonstrations annoyed white moderates who had been conspiring for several months to induce improvements in local race relations. In November 1962, the moderates had led a successful referendum to replace the existing

form of commission government with a mayor-council charter. The old administration, which had been dominated by Bull Connor, was suddenly forced to seek reelection. Although Connor duly ran for mayor, a runoff contest on April 2, 1963, resulted in his defeat to the moderate segregationist Albert Boutwell.[119]

King had agreed to forestall any demonstrations until the result of the election was known. No sooner were readers of the *Birmingham News* contemplating the small print under the banner headline "New Day Dawns," however, than a small group of blacks began sit-in protests at the downtown department stores. On April 13, eight local clergymen issued a collective statement in which they castigated King for creating renewed tensions at a time when real change had seemed imminent. Entitled "Law and Order and Common Sense," the statement urged African Americans to refrain from any future demonstrations. According to the clergymen, an equitable solution to the city's racial crisis could "best be accomplished by citizens of our own metropolitan area, white and Negro, meeting with their knowledge and experience of the local situation." Among the eight clergymen who added their signatures to the statement was Rabbi Grafman.[120]

When King read "Law and Order and Common Sense," he was languishing behind bars, having earlier disobeyed a court injunction against demonstrations. There he penned his impassioned response to the statement, the celebrated "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail." A scathing assault against white liberals who criticized direct action as illegal and urged greater caution, the letter caused Rabbi Grafman severe embarrassment. One passage in particular seemed as if it were directed against him personally. "It was 'illegal' to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany," reminded King. "Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers."[121]

Milton Grafman struggled the rest of his life to restore his tarnished reputation. Black activists in Birmingham maintained an abiding mistrust of him. Such is true of the Reverend Edward Gardner, erstwhile leader of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. In his opinion Grafman only "said those sweet words to curb the appetite." The hunger for equal rights, however, could not be sated by simple rhetoric. Asked about Grafman, Addine Drew of the ACMHR also grew visibly angry. "The clergymen's letter made me furious. Absolutely furious."[122]

Tensions between Grafman and black activists were strained yet further by a second incident several weeks later. The May 8 episode also serves to illus-

trate the bitter wrangling between northern and southern Jews during the desegregation crisis.

It was shortly after 2 A.M. that the plane carrying nineteen Conservative rabbis landed at Birmingham Municipal Airport. Stepping into the arrival lounge, the rabbis were immediately confronted by a delegation of local Jewish leaders, Milton Grafman among them. Word that the rabbis were on their way to Birmingham had reached Grafman and his associates a few hours earlier. Lawyer Karl Friedman had received a call from his friend Sylvan Laufman, who was in New York on a business trip. The Rabbinical Assembly of America was then holding its national convention in upstate Kiamesha Lake. From the late night news, Laufman had learned that a group of delegates had decided to join the demonstrations in Birmingham.[123]

No sooner had Friedman finished speaking with Laufman than he was lifting the receiver again, this time to call other Jewish community leaders. Once assembled, they set out for the airport, where two of the rabbis agreed to return to the offices of Friedman's law firm.[124]

The rabbis were told that their arrival jeopardized the negotiations between King and the downtown merchants, which had then reached a critical juncture. According to Grafman, one of the local Jewish leaders had received a call from an official at the Justice Department, urging the rabbis to return home. Grafman also shared the sentiments expressed in a letter later written by Alex Rittenbaum, president of the Birmingham Jewish Community Council, to the effect "that a settlement was in the making, that from all appearances the Rabbis' presence in Birmingham could accomplish nothing, could possibly muddy the waters, could react most unfavorably on our Jewish community, since the bigots have repeatedly claimed that the integration movement was a Jewish Communist inspired movement."[125]

Within forty-eight hours, the rabbis had already boarded a return flight from Birmingham. They had stayed long enough to join a single demonstration march led by Martin Luther King and to attend a mass meeting at the Sixth Avenue South Baptist Church. Any attempt to assess the value of their visit is nonetheless awkward. Despite their restricted role and the limited length of their stay, the rabbis received a rapturous reception from the local black community. According to Rabbi Richard Winograd, certain scenes "will remain with me forever: our tumultuous entrance into the churches, the embraces of the old people in front and shy greetings of the young people at the rear." When the rabbis made ready to return north, they were asked by the SCLC activists who accompanied them to the airport "to give each new friend

our skullcaps." With a final singing of "We Shall Overcome," the rabbis were gone.[126]

It would be wrong to belittle the worries of Birmingham Jews. The northern rabbis did indeed arrive at a delicate stage in the negotiations. The eventual settlement was only signed on May 10, two days after they had arrived in town. There was also reason to fear that their presence might provoke anti-Semitic attacks from outraged segregationists, particularly since the National States' Rights Party was due to hold a rally in Birmingham the following weekend. Long after the rabbis had left town, the local Jewish community would still have to suffer the repercussions of their arrival. As Grafman pointedly remarked, the rabbis would better understand the difficulties faced by Birmingham Jews if one of them agreed to take the pulpit at Temple Beth-Or, which had remained empty since the death of Rabbi Abraham Mesch in 1962.[127]

The caution that Grafman exercised throughout the civil rights crisis has resulted in the accusation that he was at best a coward and at worst a racist.[128] It is debatable whether Grafman deserves the criticism leveled against him. In truth, his actions reflected the attitude not only of white moderates in the city but also of many black leaders. The SCLC campaign had initially floundered in the face of opposition from local African Americans who hailed the election of Albert Boutwell as the emblem of a new era in race relations. Despite the assertions of activists like Frank Dukes, Grafman was not a segregationist. In all the furor surrounding "Law and Order and Common Sense," it is often forgotten that Grafman had been one of eleven clergymen to sign another statement condemning Governor George Wallace for his defiant stand in support of segregation. As Grafman explained of his opposition to the King campaign: "There was no argument about the goals. The objection was to making it seem as though these eight men were opposed to his goals."[129]

After the settlement between the SCLC and the downtown merchants, Grafman was to play an instrumental role in easing the transition to integration throughout the city. Albert Boutwell appointed him to the biracial Group Relations Committee, which negotiated for further peaceful change. Grafman also served on the Police Community Relations Committee, which was established in an effort to improve the strained relations between African Americans and local law enforcement officers. In May 1969, he was selected to serve on the Community Affairs Committee for Operation New Birmingham, a body which worked to improve black representation at all levels of

city government. Several years earlier, he was threatened with a million dollar libel action after protesting the presence of a Ku Klux Klan exhibit at the Alabama State Fair. According to Grafman, it was a disgrace to expose the public to the preachings of "an organization devoted and dedicated to spreading hate."[130]

Grafman also openly acknowledged that the white community had failed to fulfill its duties to African Americans. On Sunday, September 15, 1963, an explosion tore through the black Baptist church on Sixteenth Street, killing four young girls. In an emotive sermon, Grafman admonished himself and his congregation for not having done more to dispel racial extremism. "What merchants have dared to employ a Negro sales girl and place her at the counter where the public can't fail to see her? What about you doctors? Have you found it impossible to find a Negro who could be a receptionist?" Grafman cast his eye over every row of the congregation, calling on everyone in turn to take a more committed stand in support of integration.[131]

The story of Milton Grafman is a telling reminder that the ranks of the southern rabbinate were split over the desegregation issue. Grafman was a victim of the same political paralysis that gripped most southern liberals during the civil rights struggle. As Tony Badger has argued, southern liberals were often fatalistically resigned to the belief that they could not change white public opinion.[132]

Yet arguably the events in Birmingham reveal as much about men like Charles Mantinband and Perry Nussbaum as they do about Milton Grafman. Each of these rabbis operated in an atmosphere of extreme prejudice. Any actions they took in support of integration would have to be made alone and at the risk of provoking anti-Semitic retaliation. For Milton Grafman, these fears forced him into an extreme defensiveness that enabled segregationists to maintain the initiative. Other southern rabbis were confronted by the same fears, yet they struggled on in the conviction that they had a moral responsibility to others that outweighed their own selfish concerns. Their strength of will seems greater still when contrasted with the all too human frailties of Rabbi Grafman.

TIMES OF CHANGE

In an interview with *Playboy* magazine in 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. was asked to assess what mistakes he may have made in leading the civil rights movement. According to King, his most serious miscalculation was

to suppose that "the white ministers of the South, once their Christian consciences were challenged, would rise to our aid." Instead, most "folded their hands" or "even took stands *against* us."[133] King was wrong to imply that all southern clergymen were Christians. Nonetheless, it was Christian ministers who commanded the power and authority to win southern whites over to the civil rights cause. Without the active involvement of Baptist and Methodist ministers, it was impossible to organize a mainstream religious assault on racial segregation.

The response of southern rabbis to the desegregation crisis can only be understood in this context. As members of a marginalized religious minority group, rabbis were in no position to spearhead a moral crusade against southern racism. It is this profound sense of isolation which explains why even the most ardent civil rights activists among the southern rabbinate should have exercised extreme caution at all times. Given the dangers that they faced, it is therefore remarkable that men like Jacob Rothschild and Julian Feibelman should have positioned themselves so publicly in support of civil rights.

At the height of the civil rights struggle, black leaders expressed a certain sense of betrayal at the supposed failure of southern Jews to support racial integration. This must have been a painful experience for those southern rabbis whose opposition to segregation placed them at great personal and professional risk. Indeed, by the late 1960s it seemed that the civil rights movement had betrayed them. The rabbis suffered a profound sense of despair as they saw the integrationist philosophy of Martin Luther King eclipsed by an increasingly militant black separatism. "The Negroes wanted to be integrated." Julian Feibelman remarked in 1973, "Now all they want is to be separate, to vote in a bloc, to wear Afro hair-dos, and declare that 'black is beautiful.'"[134]

Not only had black radicals abandoned interracialism. Many had begun to regard their former allies as enemies. The growth of black anti-Semitism deeply disturbed the rabbis, not least so Jacob Rothschild. Rothschild first responded to the situation in September 1967, after reading reports of the recent SCLC convention in Atlanta. James Bevel and Andrew Young had drawn strong support for speeches in which they angrily denounced Israel for starting the Six-Day War. Deeply concerned, Rothschild wrote to King, asking whether the two men were expressing their own individual opinions or those of the organization as a whole. In a tone at once alarmed and accusatory, he informed King, "I have never heard an official disclaimer to the obviously prejudiced statements of some of your staff."[135]

King was anxious to allay the fears of his friend. The SCLC, he replied, had "frequently and vigorously" voiced its opposition to anti-Semitism in the past and would continue to do so in the future. As evidence he cited the recent Chicago Conference of New Politics, which several SCLC staff members had attended. A resolution had been introduced at the conference, condemning Israel and endorsing the position of the Arab powers. The SCLC activists had been both "vigorous and articulate" in expressing their opposition to this "simplistic resolution." As for King himself, he had attended the conference only to deliver the opening speech. Had he stayed, however, to hear the resolution introduced, "I would have made it crystal clear that I could not have supported any resolution calling for black separatism or calling for a condemnation of Israel and an unqualified endorsement of the policy of the Arab powers."[136]

Rothschild appears to have accepted that the SCLC was not hostile toward Israel. In 1972 he informed NAACP president Kivie Kaplan that the Jewish leadership in Atlanta was actually working toward the election of Andrew Young as mayor.[137]

The SCLC, however, did not represent the younger radicals within the civil rights movement. In January 1969, Rothschild was invited to speak in Columbus, Georgia, on "the problem of Black Militants and the Jew." Personal experience had provided him with some expertise on the subject. When the rabbi traveled to Detroit to address the Hungry Club Forum in November 1968, he was heckled repeatedly by a group of black separatists in the audience. Distressed but defiant, Rothschild told reporters: "I resent the attempt to bar me from the battle to achieve human rights, and I resent being told this is not my battle." The rabbi had a religious commitment to help others, a commitment he swore to carry out no matter what prejudice he encountered, be it "white segregation" or "black separatism."[138]

Until his death on December 31, 1973, Jacob Rothschild did indeed continue his active involvement with various civil rights agencies. The rabbi may not have abandoned the movement, but the movement had to some degree abandoned him. "I felt he lost his sense of purpose," affirmed Temple member Cecil Alexander. "It was an interesting change in a man from being alive and driven to someone who really had started to fade."[139]

It was an unfitting epitaph for a man who had toiled long and hard to combat racial inequality. Indeed, it is only in recent years that the role of southern rabbis in the civil rights struggle has begun to receive proper recognition. Their contribution should not be exaggerated: in the drama of the

desegregation crisis they were but supporting players. Although a more thorough quantitative analysis is needed, it would appear that in proportionate terms Reform rabbis were the most active of all white southern clergymen in creating a climate of tolerance and understanding in their communities. Outside of cities such as Houston and Atlanta, theirs were often the lone voices of reason among the religious leadership of the white South.

CONCLUSION

By the early 1970s, the relationship between African Americans and Jews in the South had changed. For the first time, that relationship was shaped by national rather than sectional concerns. Three factors explain this transformation.

The first was the emergence of black nationalism. By the late 1960s, impatience among young black radicals at the pace of racial reform had provoked an often violent resentment against the white establishment. Much of that anger was targeted at Jews. Tensions were stirred in the summer of 1967 when the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee launched a scathing attack against Israel for provoking the Six-Day War. Later that year a labor dispute in the New York school district of Ocean Hill–Brownsville descended into a series of retaliatory clashes between Jewish teachers and black parents. The dispute worsened during the 1970s as a result of arguments over affirmative action. These events redefined the relationship between African Americans and Jews throughout the United States. Hitherto conflicts between the two peoples had generally reflected broader tensions between black and white. Now Jews became a target of particular hatred for a significant section of the African American community. During the desegregation crisis, ideological and strategical differences had divided American Jews along sectional lines. In the future, they would stand united in common opposition to black anti-Semitism.[1]

As one conflict emerged, another drew to an end. Although racial integration was far from a reality in many parts of the region, the 1970s saw the South slowly emerge from its political crisis. For generations, southern Jews had lived in the shadows of a society that violently repressed free will. The collapse of the southern caste system liberated Jews from their reliance upon the continued goodwill of the white Gentile majority. The election in 1969 of Sam

Massell as mayor of Atlanta can be seen as symbolic of the confidence with which southern Jews reentered public life.

The increased assertiveness of southern Jews can also be explained by demographic changes. During the 1980s, it was estimated that 75–85 percent of the 800,000 Jews in the South were originally northerners. This new generation of southern Jews did not grow up as members of a minority group besieged by a deeply prejudiced majority. Nor do they share the heritage of white supremacism. Indeed, as the writer Arlene Levinson observes, many southern Jews today are not really "southern" at all.[2]

The political conditions that historically determined the relationship between African Americans and Jews in the South therefore no longer exist. Those conditions set the two peoples apart throughout most of the course of southern history.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the racial attitudes of southern Jews were shaped by their status as a white ethnic minority. Jews occupied an anomalous position within the southern caste system. Although their skin color defined them as white, their ethnic and religious differences set them apart from the white Gentile majority. While Jews were warmly welcomed for their contributions to the economic and civic life of the South, they also suffered persistent social exclusion. As W. J. Cash famously observed, "The Jew, with his universal refusal to be assimilated, is everywhere the eternal alien; and in the South, where any difference had always stood out with great vividness, he was especially so."[3]

During the desegregation crisis, southern Jews were torn between two contradictory instincts. A historical experience of persecution sensitized Jews to the plight of other oppressed minorities. Southern Jews were therefore far more supportive of desegregation than the rest of the white community. At the same time it is precisely because of that experience of persecution that Jews have as an act of self-protection striven to adapt to the laws and customs of their adopted homelands. In the American South, that meant more than anything else an acceptance of racial segregation. Fear of anti-Semitic reprisals forced many southern Jews into an uneasy silence during the civil rights struggle.[4]

At the time, the failure of southern Jews to support the black struggle for racial equality antagonized not only African Americans but also their northern coreligionists. The perception of a grand political alliance between African Americans and Jews is to a large degree informed by the stories of student activists and rabbis who traveled South to participate in direct action cam-

paigns against white racism. One should nonetheless warn against drawing a false dichotomy between northern and southern Jews. As Clayborne Carson has argued, only a minority of northern Jews actively participated in civil rights protest.[5] The relationship between African Americans and Jews in the northern states has in truth always been characterized by conflict as much as by cooperation. While scholars have arguably exaggerated the extent of northern Jewish commitment to the civil rights movement, they have also underestimated the contribution of southern Jews.

What this book has sought to reveal is the diversity of the southern Jewish response to the civil rights issue. The fact remains that the majority of southern Jews were frightened into silence during the desegregation crisis. In a profoundly hostile environment, the only means to ensure their own protection was to provide tacit support for the status quo. At the same time, a conspicuous minority demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice their personal and professional security in support of another persecuted minority. Southern Jews were in reality deeply divided by the integration issue. Divisions existed between men and women, young and old, religious leaders and congregations. Small-town Jews were more restricted in their actions than city Jews. The same distinction can be made between the Jews of the Lower and Upper South. Southern Jews are not exempt from criticism for their support of a caste system that repressed millions of African Americans. It is nonetheless time to acknowledge the contribution of an embattled minority in the destruction of Jim Crow.

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NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. *Atlanta Jewish Times,* January 30, February 27, 1987.

2. Morton J. Gaba, "Segregation and a Southern Jewish Community," *Jewish Frontier* 21, no. 10 (October 1954): 12.

3. Emily Miller Budick, *Blacks and Jews in Literary Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9–10; Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977). See also the foreword by James Farmer in *Bridges and Boundaries: African Americans and American Jews,* ed. Jack Salzman with Adina Black and Gretchen Sullivan Sorin (New York: George Braziller and the Jewish Museum, 1992), 12–14.

4. Abraham J. Peck, ed., *Blacks and Jews: The American Experience, 1654–1987,* exhibition catalog (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1987), n.p.

5. Murray Friedman, *What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Mentor, 1989). The quotation is from page 3 of Kaufman's book. For an older work on the subject that adopts the same line, see Robert G. Weisbord and Arthur Stein, *Bittersweet Encounter: The Afro-American and the American Jew* (Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970).

6. Alice Walker, *Meridian* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 1976.

7. Raymond A. Mohl, "'South of the South'? Jews, Blacks, and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945–1960," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18, no. 2 (winter 1999): 4–5.

8. Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 41; Arlene Levinson, "Different Lives in a Different Region: They're Really Not Southerners," *Present Tense* 10, no. 2 (1983): 45; Abraham J. Karp, *Haven and Home: A History of the Jews in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), 11, 56.

9. Arnold Shankman, "Southern Jews: People in Need of a History," *Jewish Currents* 27, no. 11 (December 1973): 16–19.

10. One typical example of the hagiographic writing on southern Jews is Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1905).

11. Carolyn Gray LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry: A History of the Jewish Experience in Arkansas, 1820s to 1990s* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994). Quotation from page vii. Race is also treated as a peripheral issue in Gerry Cristol, *A Light in the Prairie: Temple Emanu-El of Dallas, 1872–1997* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1998).

12. Bertram W. Korn's works include *Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865* (Elkins Park, Penn.: Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, 1961); *The Early Jews of New Orleans* (Waltham, Mass., 1969); *The Jews of Mobile, Alabama, 1763–1841* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1970); and the article, "The Jews of the Confederacy," *American Jewish Archives* 13 (April 1961): 3–90. Jacob Rader Marcus's major contribution to the subject was the three-volume *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775–1865* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955).

13. Among the most important works published on southern Jews in the 1970s are Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Nathan M. Kaganoff and Melvin I. Urofsky, eds., *"Turn to the South": Essays on Southern Jewry* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979); and John Shelton Reed, "Ethnicity in the South: Some Observations on the Acculturation of Southern Jews," *Ethnicity* 6, no. 1 (March 1979): 97–106.

14. Leonard Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954–1970," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1973): 231–41; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 177; Stephen J. Whitfield, "Blood and Sand: The Jewish Community of South Florida," *American Jewish History* 82 (1994): 73–74.

15. P. Allen Krause, "The Southern Rabbi and Civil Rights" (rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1967). See also Morton J. Gaba, "Segregation and a Southern Jewish Community," 12–13.

16. Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin, eds., *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997).

17. Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry," 232. Statistics taken from the cumulative indexes of the *American Jewish Yearbook,* vols. 55 and 56.

18. James A. Wax, "The Attitude of the Jews in the South toward Integration," *CCAR Journal* (June 1959): 17; Theodore Lowi, "Southern Jews: The Two Communities," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 6, no. 1 (July 1964): 103–9.

19. Seth Forman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being Jewish: Desegregation in the South and the Crisis of Jewish Liberalism," *American Jewish History* 85, no. 22 (1997): 122–23.

1. FROM SLAVERY TO SEGREGATION

1. John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America,* rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 141–43. See also Stephen J. Whitfield, *Voices of Jacob, Hands of Esau: Jews in American Life and Thought* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1984), 216–19.

2. Morris B. Abram, *The Day Is Short: An Autobiography* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 31; Howard W. Odum, *An American Epoch: Southern Portraiture in the National Picture* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930); 178–79; Margaret Jarman Hagood, *Mothers of the South: Portraiture of the White Tenant Farm Woman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 180; Arnold Shankman, "Atlanta Jewry, 1900–1930," *American Jewish Archives* 25, no. 2 (1973): 148–49; Joseph L. Morrison, "A Southern Philo-Semite: Josephus Daniels of North Carolina," *Judaism* 12, no. 1 (winter 1963): 79; Hollace Ava Weiner, "The Mixers: The Role of Rabbis Deep in the Heart of Texas," *American Jewish History* 85 (September 1997), 290, 303–4; Harry Golden, *Forgotten Pioneer* (Cleveland: World, 1963), 44; Ludwig J. Lewisohn, *Up Stream: An Autobiography* (London: Grant Richards, 1923), 42–43.

3. Jonathan Sarna, "'The Mythical Jew' and the 'Jew Next Door' in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Anti-Semitism in American History,* ed. David A. Gerber (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 64; Leonard Rogoff, "Is the Jew White? The Racial Place of the Southern Jew," *American Jewish History* 85, no. 3 (September 1997): 202; C. Vann Woodward, ed., *Mary Chesnut's Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 317, 547.

4. This line of argument adheres closely to the existing scholarly opinion on southern Jews.

5. Rev. Calvin Fairbank, *During Slavery Times: How He "Fought the Good Fight" to Prepare "The Way"* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 148–49, 165, 191.

6. Ira Rosenwaike, "The Jewish Population of the United States as Estimated from the Census of 1820," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1963–64): 164–77; *Jewish South,* March 1, 1878. The census figures cover only Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Virginia. Whether or not they are really representative of Jews throughout the South is therefore open to debate. It is unfortunate that Rosenwaike did not include statistics about slave ownership in his earlier analysis of the 1790 census, since this would have enabled an appreciation of change or consistency over time. Ira Rosenwaike, "An Estimate and Analysis of the Jewish Population of the United States in 1790," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 50 (September 1960): 23–67.

7. Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 299; David Brion Davis, "The Slave Trade and the Jews," *New York Review of Books,* December 22, 1994, 16. The largest Jewish slaveholder in the South appears to have been Jacob Barrett, who "became a millionaire, owning before the war

a *thousand* negroes on his rice plantations near the Savannah River." Edwin J. Scott, *Random Recollections of a Long Life, 1806 to 1876* (Columbia, S.C.: Charles A. Calvo Jr., Printer, 1884), 83. For the names of other Jewish plantation owners, see Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery,* 13–14.

8. Marx E. Cohen (1810–1881), plantation journals, 1840–61, 1840–1864, 1861–1868, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. Similar difficulties are raised by the records of Raphael J. Moses, a Jewish slaveholder who owned an 835-acre plantation at Esquline Hill, near Columbus, Georgia. See Moses, "Raphael J. Moses: His Life and Letters," Atlanta Jewish Community Archives.

9. Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry, 1769–1976: Shabbat in Shockoe* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 165; Montgomery Moses to Hon. J. W. Chandler, Washington, D.C., January 5, 1866, American Jewish Archives Small Collections.

10. Stanley L. Falk, "Divided Loyalties in 1861: The Decision of Major Alfred Mordecai," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 48 (September 1958/June 1959): 149; Morris U. Schappes, ed. *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654–1875,* 3d ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 293–301.

11. Kate E. R. Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed: The Narrative of Peter and Vina Still after Forty Years of Slavery* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), 220–24. A similar observation may be made of the family of Richmond sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel. As a child, Ezekiel taught one of his house servants to read and write, something he did with the full assent of his grandparents. His father also performed a significant act of kindness toward a slave. White Lucy was the servant and mistress of a Philadelphia doctor, who hired her out to a Richmond family. When the doctor moved to Richmond, Lucy ran away. Taking pity on the recaptured slave, Ezekiel's father successfully "offered to give Lucy a home in our house, not as a servant but as a seamstress, if only the doctor did not persist in selling her." Joseph Gutmann and Stanley F. Chyet, eds., *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Memoirs from the Baths of Diocletian* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 94–95, 97.

12. For this and other instances of Jewish masters manumitting their slaves, see Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917* (Richmond: Herbert T. Ezekiel, 1917), 78, 85; Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery,* 31; and Samuel Myers, deed of emancipation, Petersburg, Virginia, April 20, 1796, Documents File, American Jewish Archives.

13. Leon Huhner, *The Life of Judah Touro, 1775–1854* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 69.

14. Mark I. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern: The Jews of Savannah, Georgia, 1830–70," *American Jewish History* 86 (March 1998): 61.

15. Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom* (1861; New York: Random House, 1984), 220.

16. Charles Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America; or, Sketches of a Tour in the United States and Canada, in 1857–8,* 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1859), 1:322; Ezekiel and

Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond,* 98; Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 68; Eli N. Evans, *Judah P. Benjamin, the Jewish Confederate* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 200.

17. J. Benwell, *An Englishman's Travels in America: His Observations of Life and Manners in the Free and Slave States* (London: Binns and Goodwin, 1853), 205–6.

18. Richard H. Shryock, ed. *Letters of Richard A. Arnold, M.D., 1808–1876, Mayor of Savannah, Georgia, First Secretary of the American Medical Association* (Durham, N.C., 1929), 70; Solomon Breibart, "Penina Moise, Southern Jewish Poetess," in *Jews of the South: Selected Essays from the Southern Jewish Historical Society,* ed. Samuel Proctor and Louis Schmier with Malcolm Stern (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 36–37. In his 1906 biography of Judah P. Benjamin, Louisiana senator and owner of a plantation with some 140 slaves, Pierce Butler wrote, "Some few of his slaves were still living a year or two since, and would tell visitors all sorts of tales of the master of long ago;—none but kindly memories, and romantic legends of the days of glory on the old place." It should come as no surprise, however, that when a white stranger appeared, asking questions about the old days of slavery, Benjamin's former slaves may have been on their guard and told him only what they believed he wanted to hear. Pierce Butler, *Judah P. Benjamin* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs, 1906), 62.

19. Helen Tunnicliff Catterall, ed., *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro,* 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926–37), 2:390; James W. Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 96.

20. Jessie Fortune, "Among the Children of the East Side Jews, 1905," *Jewish Currents* 29 (February 1975): 4; Marx E. Cohen, January 13, 1861, December 8, 1863, plantation journal, 1861–68. Sick list from May 1, 1854, plantation journal, 1840–61.

21. Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schecter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews: A Photographic History* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1990), 9. Another act of systematic cruelty by a Jewish master is documented in Venture Smith, et al., *Five Black Lives: The Autobiographies of Venture Smith, James Mars, William Grimes, the Rev. W. G. Offley, James L. Smith* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 76–83.

22. Herman Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia,* 2 vols. (Baltimore: Theo. Kroh and Sons, Printers, 1900), 2:93; Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 33; Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey through Texas; or, A Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York: Dix, Edwards, 1857), 329

23. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1853), 151; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry,* 167; Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (1931; New York: Frederick Ungar, 1959), 93, 100; William Jay, *Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1853), 267.

24. Korn missed the Arkansas traders Hirsch, Adler, and Block. He also missed Leopold Newburger, an immigrant from Felheim, Bavaria. Having worked as a peddler around Grenada, Mississippi, Newburger then moved to Coffeeville, where he established a mercantile company. Among the merchandise he handled were slaves. Until the Civil War, Newburger was an agent for the Forrest and Walton Company of Memphis, which was run by none other than Nathan Bedford Forrest. Stephen F. Corrigan, "Robert Cohn: Memphis Immigrant, Activist, Cotton Man, and Farmer" (master's thesis, Memphis State University, 1989), 35; Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery,* 40–42; Catterall, *Judicial Cases,* 5:266, 2:466; Bancroft, *Slave Trading,* 98; Korn, *Jews of Mobile,* 36; Marcus, *Memoirs,* 2:138; LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 7; Mervyn H. Sterne, memoir, 1981, 2–3, Sterne Library, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Liliane Crete, *Daily Life in Louisiana, 1815–1830* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 154.

25. Allan Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 4–5; Selma S. Lewis, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt: The Jewish Community of Memphis, Tennessee, 1840s–1960s* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 8, 21; LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 23, 38, 45; "Elias and Cohen, Cotton Buyers," advertisement in *Western Democrat,* November 5, 1861, and following issues.

26. Bancroft, *Slave Trading,* 97–98, 175–77. The original analysis of Bancroft's figures was made by Bertram Korn.

27. Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 261–62, 265.

28. Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12; Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), 203–4; John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South, 1800–1861* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956), 86–87; William G. Bean, "An Aspect of Know Nothingism: The Immigrant and Slavery," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 23 (1924): 328–29.

29. Louis Schmier, "Jews," in *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery,* ed. Randall M. Miller and John David Smith (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988), 377. See also Jason H. Silverman, "'The Law of the Land Is the Law': Antebellum Jews, Slavery, and the Old South," in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Towards a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States,* ed. Jack Salzman and Cornel West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 75.

30. Gary Phillip Zola, *Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788–1828: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 95–98.

31. Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed,* 40; Marcus, *Memoirs,* 2:295–96.

32. Larry Koger, *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790–1860* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1985); Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984).

33. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 62; Bertram Korn, "Factors Bearing upon

the Survival of Judaism in the Ante-Bellum Period," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (June 1964): 344; Stephen Hertzberg, *Strangers within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1915* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978), 181; Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 44; Marcus, *Memoirs,* 2:51.

34. Anna King to Thomas Butler King, March 26, May 21, 1855, Thomas Butler King Papers, 1763–1868, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; John F. Marszalek, ed., *The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 162. For other expressions of anti-Semitism, see E. Merton Coulter, *College Life in the Old South* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 112; Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America,* 176; *Jewish Chronicle and Hebrew Observer,* June 29, 1860.

35. Carol Bleser, ed., *Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 94–95, 126; Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 249; Hagy, *This Happy Land,* 40–41; Leo Shpall, "Some Anti-Semitic Incidents in South Carolina," *Jewish Forum* 30 (February 1947): 43–44, and 30 (March 1947): 66, 88.

36. Silverman, "'The Law of the Land Is the Law,'" 81; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 22, 44.

37. Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 427–29.

38. Eugene D. Genovese, *The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 123, 249–50. On the political careers of these and other southern Jews, see *Jewish Chronicle and Hebrew Observer,* January 28, 1859, April 6, 1860, December 1, 1865; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* March 7, 1958; Philip Phillips, "A Summary of the Principal Events of My Life," Phillips-Myers Family Papers, 1804–1928, vol. 9, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans,* 189; Samuel Proctor, "Jewish Life in New Orleans, 1718–1860," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 40 (April 1957): 122; Leo Shpall, *The Jews in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Steeg, 1936), 9; Winegarten and Schechter, *Deep in the Heart,* 9.

39. *Western Democrat,* June 26, 1860; Eli N. Evans, *Judah P. Benjamin,* 31, 33, 7; "Remarks of Mr. Yulee, of Florida, in the Senate of the United States, February 14, 15 and 17, 1848, On the Rights of the People of the United States in Acquired Territory," 1–2, David L. Yulee Papers, George A. Smathers Libraries, Department of Special Collections, University of Florida; Joseph G. Adler, "The Public Career of Senator David Levy Yulee" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1973), ii, 53–55, 62–67, 77–78, 85, 137–41, 147; Leon Huhner, "David L. Yulee, Florida's First Senator," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 25 (1917): 22–24.

40. George Fitzhugh, "Our Trip to the Country—Virginia," *De Bow's Review* 3 (January 1867): 168. The ethnologist Dr. Josiah Nott similarly used Jews as a means of illustrating the finer qualities of the white race in contrast to the supposed inadequacies of African Americans. William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes toward Race in America, 1815–59* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 65–72, 147–48.

41. Kathleen C. Berkeley, "'Like a Plague of Locust': Immigration and Social Change in Memphis, Tennessee, 1850–1880" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1980), 85–86; Selma Lewis, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt,* 31–32.

42. Edwin De Leon to J. P. Benjamin, Paris, September 30, 1863, reprinted in *Richmond Enquirer,* November 21, 1863; Harry Simonhoff, "The De Leon Brothers of the Carolinas," *Southern Jewish Weekly,* June 30, 1961, 12–13.

43. Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier, and Citizen* (Boston: Gregg Press, 1972), 117–424. For further details of Jewish soldiers in the Confederate army, see "Loyalty of the Jews," *Western Democrat,* October 1, 1861; "An American Epic: The Jews of Charleston," *Southern Jewish Weekly,* February 9, 1951; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* December 19, 1958; Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 64, 67; Selma Lewis, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt,* 35–36; Shpall, *Jews in Louisiana,* 11; Rev. Henry Cohen, "A Modern Maccabean," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 6 (1897): 31–37; Audrey Daniels Kariel, "The Jewish Story and Memories of Marshall, Texas," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1982): 196.

44. Leopold Jacob Weil to Josiah Weil, May 16, 1861. Photostat copy filed in Jacob M. Rothschild Papers, box 6, folder 4, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University. Jews continued to buy and sell slaves during the Civil War. Siren Kaufman, Richmond, Virginia, bill of sale for purchase of slave Lucy Ann, for $775, Slavery Collection no. 503, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

45. E. Merton Coulter, *The Confederate States of America, 1861–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 220; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 440.

46. "The Grievances," *Richmond Enquirer,* February 6, 1863; *North Carolina Standard,* August 22, 1862; Berkeley, "Like a Plague of Locust," 128–30; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy,* 335–36; Louis Schmier, "Notes and Documents on the 1862 Expulsion of Jews from Thomasville, Georgia," *American Jewish Archives* 32 (April 1980): 9–22; Richard M. McMurry, "Rebels, Extortioners, and Counterfeiters: A Note on Confederate Judeophobia," *Atlanta Historical Journal* 22 (fall/winter 1978): 45–52. Similar accusations against Jews can be found in William Kauffman Scarborough, ed., *The Diary of Edmund Ruffin,* 3 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 3:326; Celine Frenaux Garcia, *Celine: Remembering Louisiana, 1850–1871* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 143–44; Marszalek, *The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes,* 209, 300; J. B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1866), 1:78, 221, 2:361.

47. Simon Mayer to his family, April 17, 1864, Simon Mayer Family Papers (1864–1985), ms. 815, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University.

48. Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1976), 97.

49. Marcus, *Memoirs,* 3:336; Moses, "His Life and Letters."

50. Marcus, *Memoirs,* 3:368. See also Spencer B. King Jr., "Fanny Cohen's Journal of Sherman's Occupation of Savannah," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 41 (December 1957): 412–13.

51. *Jewish Messenger,* August 4, 1865. See also *Jewish Chronicle and Hebrew Observer,* July 21, 1865.

52. The expansion of Jewish congregational life across the South was discussed extensively in the *Jewish Messenger.* See its editions of May 11, June 8, and September 21, 1866, and June 21, August 2, and October 11, 1867.

53. David Yulee to William M. Merrick, August 4, 1865, box 7 (149-C), Yulee Papers.

54. J. H. Levy, letter to daughters, March 24, 1868, Phillips-Myers Family Papers.

55. David Goldman to Sam Franko, October 29, 1874, Goldman Family History, Jews in the South Manuscript Series, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University. For other expressions of anger and resentment against Radical rule, see Maxwell Whiteman, ed., "Kronikals of the Times: Memphis, 1862, by A. E. Frankland," *American Jewish Archives* 9 (October 1957): 93–94, and David Mayer (1815–1890), Family Histories, undated, Atlanta Jewish Community Archives.

56. John Hart Lewis, telephone interview with author, March 14, 1994; Robert Goldman, "Meyer Goldman," 5–6, Goldman Family History; Bernard M. Baruch, *My Own Story* (London: Odhams Press, 1958), 37, 40; Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776–1985,* 3 vols. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 3:152, 772.

57. Harry Simonhoff, *Jewish Participants in the Civil War* (New York: Arco, 1963); Alfred B. Williams, *Hampton and His Red Shirts: South Carolina's Deliverance in 1876* (1935; reprint, Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 63, 74, 77, 108–9, 213, 318, 384.

58. Jacob Nunez Cardozo, *Reminiscences of Charleston* (Charleston: Joseph Walker, 1866), 8, 10. Similar sentiments are expressed in Capt. I. Hermann, *Memoirs of a Veteran Who Served as a Private in the 60's in the War between the States: Personal Incidents, Experiences, and Observations* (Atlanta: Byrd Printing Company, 1911), 233–36, 259.

59. Edwin De Leon, *Thirty Years of My Life on Three Continents,* 2 vols. (London: Ward and Downey, 1890), 1:30, 32. See also Thomas Cooper De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the 60's* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 16, and Marcus, *Memoirs,* 2:138.

60. The best available works on this subject are Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Charles R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

61. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War,* 50; Rebekah Kohut, *My Portion: (An Autobiography)* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1925), 26–27; Arnold Shankman and Marion Wright, "Two Southerners Who Made a Difference," *Jewish Currents* 21 (February 1977): 24; "History of the Jews in Florida," 2, in Ruby Diamond correspondence, biographical material, and newspaper clippings concerning the Diamond family, George A. Smathers Libraries, Department of Special Collections, University of Florida. The Confederate loyalties of Jews in one small section of the South are also briefly discussed in W. McKee Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails: Reconstruction on the Lower Cape Fear* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 123–24.

62. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry,* 206; *Jewish South,* September 15, 1893.

63. For these and other developments, see Weisbord and Stein, *Bittersweet Encounter,* 35–39, and Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land,* 118–98. For further information on the financial assistance that Jewish philanthropists provided to black education, see Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901–1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 140–41, and Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins, *Rosa Parks: My Story* (New York: Dial Books, 1992), 42–45.

64. *Jewish Chronicle,* May 18, 1900.

65. Philip S. Bernstein, "Are All Jews Alike?" *Jewish Post* (Indiana edition), October 30, 1936; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* December 23, 1949; Rabbi Samuel Cook, "Southern Jewish Youth Criticized Sympathetically," *Jewish Post,* April 23, 1937; Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers,* 14 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972–1989), 6:238.

66. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land,* 4–5; *Huntsville Gazette,* January 6, 1894; Hertzberg, *Strangers within the Gate City,* 79–80.

67. Cynthia Betty Levee, "Jewish Southern Belles," *Jewish Currents* 41, no. 7 (July–August 1987): 26; Jonathan Daniels, *A Southerner Discovers the South* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 258–59.

68. Alexander DeConde, *Half Bitter, Half Sweet: An Excursion into Italian-American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 125.

69. William Ivy Hair, *Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest: Louisiana Politics, 1877–1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 158–60; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 92; William F. Holmes, "Whitecapping: Anti-Semitism in the Populist Era," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (March 1974): 244–61. Anti-Semitic stereotypes were also a hallmark of Populist rhetoric in North Carolina. See Morrison, "A Southern Philo-Semite," 84–85.

70. John Kenneth Morland, *Millways of Kent* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 187–88; Gary M. Fink, *The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Strike of 1914–1915: Espionage, Labor Conflict, and New South Industrial Relations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 1993), 86–90; Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 319 n.28; Bryant Simon, "Choosing between

the Ham and the Union: Paternalism in the Cone Mills of Greensboro, 1925–1930," in *Hanging by a Thread: Social Change in Southern Textiles,* ed. Jeffrey Leiter, Michael D. Schulman, and Rhonda Zingraff (Ithaca, New York: ILR Press, 1991), 81–100.

71. The best accounts of the affair remain Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), and Harry Golden, *A Little Girl Is Dead* (London: Cassell, 1966).

72. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case,* xiii–xiv, 9–11, 32–35, 95–99; Nancy MacLean, "The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Making of Reactionary Populism," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 3 (December 1991): 940–42.

73. Sol Beton, interviewed by Cliff Kuhn, August 15, 1979, Living Atlanta Collection, folder 12, box 35, Atlanta Historical Society; Hertzberg, *Strangers within the Gate City,* 213–14; Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case,* 156–68; Abram, *The Day Is Short,* 21.

74. David Goldfield, *Region, Race, and Cities: Interpreting the Urban South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 154.

75. Solomon Wallace Hoffman, autobiography, 1956, Biographies File, American Jewish Archives.

76. Higham, *Send These To Me,* 149.

77. LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 204, 209, 256, 258, 270, 276. The anti-Semitic rhetoric of the Klan is also captured in Rabbi Lee J. Levinger, *Anti-Semitism in the United States: Its History and Causes* (New York: Bloch, 1925), 79, and *TWK Monthly* 2, no. 8 (February 1925), microfilm copy in Ku Klux Klan Scrapbooks, Birmingham Public Library.

78. Abraham J. Peck, "That Other 'Peculiar Institution': Jews and Judaism in the Nineteenth-Century South," *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 2 (May 1987): 107; Karl Friedman, "Where Is the Ku Klux Klan?" unpublished manuscript, copy in author's possession; Mark H. Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie: The Birmingham Experience* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 86–87.

79. *New York Age,* February 3, 1915.

80. For more on university quotas, see David Goldfield, "A Sense of Place: Jews, Blacks, and White Gentiles in the American South," *Southern Cultures* 3, no. 1 (1997): 69–70; Morrison, "A Southern Philo-Semite," 87; Karl N. Shapiro, "University," in *Poems of a Jew* (New York: Random House, 1958), 10–11. On the refusal to admit Jews to social clubs, see Karl Friedman interview; Edwin Dunaway, interview with author, June 13, 1994; Joe and Carolyn Tenenbaum interview; Dr. Julian Wiener and Kathryn Wiener, interview with author, March 12, 1994; Josephine Heyman, Living Atlanta Collection, folder 10, box 37; Marshall Bloom, "A Participant Observation Study of the Attitudes of Selma Jews towards Integration" (bachelor's thesis, Amherst College, April 1966), 34; Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860–1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 212–13, 221, 351–52; Harry Golden, "Jew and Gentile in the New South: Segregation at Sundown," *Commentary* 20, no. 5 (November 1955): 403, 410; Carl V. Harris, *Polit-*

ical Power in Birmingham, 1871–1921 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 54–55; LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 155; Shankman, "Atlanta Jewry," 153. Discrimination in holiday resorts is referred to in Whitfield, "Blood and Sand," 82. Social exclusion in New Orleans is discussed in "Jews and the Mardi Gras," *Modern View* 32 (March 24, 1916): 11.

81. *Florida Jewish News,* September 1936, October 1937; *Jewish Post,* January 7, 1944; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* November 24, 1939; November 7, 1941, April 17, 1942.

82. *Florida Jewish News,* September 1936; *Jewish Post,* July 31, 1936, March 20, 1935; Edward S. Shapiro, "Anti-Semitism Mississippi Style," in *Anti-Semitism in American History,* ed. David A. Gerber (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 135, 141; Al Segal, "Rankin," *Jewish Post,* March 10, 1944.

83. Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie,* 85–86; *Jewish Sentiment,* June 5, 1896; Karl Friedman, "Where Is the Ku Klux Klan?"; Franklin L. Jonas, "The Early Life and Career of B. Charney Vladeck, 1886–1921: The Emergence of an Immigrant Spokesman" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1972), 86–87.

84. Rogoff, "Is the Jew White?" 211–12, 218.

85. Ruth Scheinberg, "The Pekl: Folk Histories of Jewish Peddlers in the South, 1890–1914" (master's thesis, Emory University, 1980), 6; E. T. Lewis, interview, Living Atlanta Collection, box 19. The relationship between Jewish retailers and African Americans is discussed in more detail in Clive Webb, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers in the Age of Jim Crow," *Southern Jewish History* 2 (1999): 55–80.

86. *Savannah Tribune,* December 6, 1913; Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915–1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 56.

87. Beverly S. Williams, "Anti-Semitism and Shreveport, Louisiana: The Situation in the 1920s," *Louisiana History* 21, no. 4 (fall 1980): 398; Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Braided Identity of Southern Jewry," *American Jewish History* 77 (March 1988): 376–77.

88. David H. Pierce, "Is the Jew a Friend of the Negro?" *Crisis,* 30, no. 4 (August 1925); Charles S. Johnson, *Patterns of Negro Segregation,* 4th ed. (New York: Harper, 1943), 197.

89. For the dramatic and definitive account of the Scottsboro case, see Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

90. Joseph H. Gumbiner, "Taking a Stand in Dixie," manuscript, summer 1961, American Jewish Archives.

91. Carter, *Scottsboro,* 254–59; Herman Pollack, "A Forgotten Fighter for Justice: Ben Goldstein-Lowell," *Jewish Currents* 30, no. 6 (June 1976): 14–18. For a further example of a rabbi threatened with being fired for his stand on civil rights, see the experience of Louis Youngerman in Cheryl Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Com-

munity and the Struggle for Civil Rights," in *African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies in Convergence and Conflict,* ed. V. P. Franklin et al. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 160.

92. *The Jewish South,* November 24, 1898.

93. Bea Gotthelf, interview with author, March 14, 1994.

2. BLACK PERCEPTIONS OF JEWS

1. Quotation from *Jet* in Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–63* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 185. The best exposition of the Montgomery bus boycott is J. Mills Thornton III, "Challenge and Response in the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–1956," in *From Civil War to Civil Rights: Alabama, 1860–1960, an Anthology from the* Alabama Review, ed. Sarah W. Higgins (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987), 463–519.

2. William S. Malev, "The Jews of the South in the Conflict on Segregation," *Conservative Judaism* 13, no. 1 (fall 1958): 45.

3. James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 370.

4. Martin Luther King Jr. to Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, September 28, 1967, box 8, folder 1, Rothschild Papers. More curt criticism of southern Jewry was made by King's adviser Bayard Rustin. Speaking in May 1964 at a conference on Negro-Jewish relations in the United States, Rustin announced to the audience, "I am here to tell you that the Jews in the South are playing no creative role in the struggle." Rustin, "The Civil Rights Struggle," *Jewish Social Studies* 27 (January 1965): 35.

5. Charles Phillips, telephone interview with author, March 19, 1994; Ozell Sutton, interview with author, October 26, 1993.

6. Roy Wilkins, "Jewish-Negro Relations: An Evaluation," *American Judaism* 12, no. 3 (spring 1963): 4–5.

7. Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 129–30; Lenora E. Berson, *The Negroes and the Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971), 121; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* May 17, 1957.

8. Whitfield, *Voices of Jacob,* 242.

9. Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 198; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," *Atlantic Monthly,* June 1867, 688.

10. Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Origins of Black Anti-Semitism in America," *American Jewish Archives* 38, no. 2 (November 1986): 113–22; Rachel Mordecai Lazarus to Ellen Mordecai, June 23, 1822, Mordecai Family Papers, 1783–1947, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

11. George Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography,* 31 vols. (West-

port, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972–78), 3:208 and 18:132; Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 50–51.

12. Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (1898; New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 185–86; Harlan and Smock, *Booker T. Washington Papers,* 2:390. A fictional treatment of this subject can be found in William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967; London: Picador, 1994), 300–303.

13. John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 442–43.

14. Horace Mann Bond, "Negro Attitudes toward Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 27, no. 1 (January 1965): 4. In its regular Sunday school column, written by Rev. D. M. Stearns, the *Savannah Tribune* spent several weeks exploring the story of Moses. *Savannah Tribune,* September 27, October 18, and October 25, 1913.

15. Hortense Powdermaker, *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1967), 145; Rabbi Albert Friedlander, interview with author; Bond, "Negro Attitudes toward Jews," 3–4.

16. Adam Nossiter, *Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers* (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1994), 204; Thomas D. Clark, "The Post–Civil War Economy in the South," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (June 1966): 430; John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 129–30; Maurice S. Evans, *Black and White in the Southern States: A Study of the Race Problem in the United States from a South African Point of View* (London: Longmans, Green, 1915), 105; Goldfield, *Region, Race, and Cities,* 156–57.

17. Rev. Walter Kimbrough, interview with author, December 8, 1993; *Crisis* 43, no. 3 (March 1936): 80; Dorothy Bolden, interview, December 7, 1978, Living Atlanta Collection, folder 12, box 35.

18. Dr. George A. Owens, interview with author, March 23, 1994.

19. Richard Wright, *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1986), 215. On the ascendancy of white southern influence in the national political scene, the *Atlanta Independent* asserted on August 14, 1915: "Every race in this country has yielded to the prowess and leadership of the Southern white man except the Negro. The Jew acknowledges that he is master." African Americans would evidently have to stand alone in their struggle against segregation.

20. *Atlanta Daily World,* September 19, 1938; James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), 158.

21. David J. Hellwig, "The Afro-American and the Immigrant, 1880–1930: A Study of Black Social Thought" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1973), 33–45; *Nashville Globe,* August 9, 1907.

22. *Atlanta Independent.* For the argument about the lack of competition between Jews and African Americans in the job market, see Shankman, "Friend or Foe?" in *"Turn to the South,"* ed. Kaganoff and Urofsky, 123; Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost*

Promised Land, 5. It was not always exclusively Jews to whom black leaders turned for inspiration. Addressing an audience in Philadelphia, Booker T. Washington asserted, "We must be proud of being a Negro as the Japanese is of being a Japanese." It does not, however, appear that such sentiments were universally shared among other African Americans. *Savannah Tribune,* August 23, 1914.

23. "Race Prejudice in Europe," December 5, 1911, *Booker T. Washington Papers,* 2: 390–97, 5:369–70; Carter G. Woodson, review of *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book, 315–1791,* by Jacob R. Marcus, *Journal of Negro History* 23, no. 4 (October 1938): 494–95.

24. *Savannah Tribune,* November 15, 1913.

25. *Richmond Planet,* June 27, 1936.

26. *Norfolk Journal and Guide,* January 14, 1922.

27. "Has Frank Had a Fair Trial?" *Atlanta Independent,* March 21, 1914; "The Lynching of Frank," *Richmond Planet,* August 21, 1915. On the issue of spiraling lawlessness in the South, see also "Georgia's Shame!" *Atlanta Independent,* August 21, 1915.

28. *Savannah Tribune,* August 30, 1913, August 21, 1915.

29. MacLean, "The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered," 924; Golden, *A Little Girl Is Dead,* 182–83; Clarence Feibelman interview, Living Atlanta Collection, box 11.

30. Diner, *A Time for Gathering,* 34.

31. *Huntsville Gazette,* August 6, September 17, and November 5, 1881; February 25, April 15, May 6, and May 27, 1882; November 19, 1887; February 14, February 21, August 15, and November 7, 1891; August 20, 1892. The *Gazette* also reported on anti-Semitic violence in other countries, including Corfu and Germany. *Huntsville Gazette,* August 20, December 3, 1881; May 16, 1891. Discrimination against Jews in Prussia was discussed in the *Richmond Planet,* January 28, 1890. Nationally distributed journals such as the *Crusader* included sensitive coverage of events in Europe. *Crusader* 1, no. 11 (July 1919): 8; 3, no. 6 (February 1921): 9–10.

32. *Booker T. Washington Papers,* 8:442.

33. *Voice of the Negro* 3, no. 9 (September 1906): 623; *Nashville Globe,* September 20, 1907.

34. *Voice of the Negro* 1, no. 2 (October 1905): 675; *Atlanta Independent,* December 10, 1910.

35. "The Jews Look Ahead," *Atlanta Daily World,* May 6, 1945.

36. *New York Times,* March 27, 1933.

37. *Afro-American and Richmond Planet,* June 4, 1938; *Florida Jewish News,* March 1937.

38. D. L. Smith, "Types of Fascism Seen by Writer in George's Reply," *Atlanta Daily World,* August 21, 1938. Fifteen months before the Nazis came to power in Germany, the *Savannah Tribune* of October 22, 1931, asserted that Jews and African Americans were victims of a same upward trend in discrimination against minority groups throughout the world. While Jews "receive the brunt" of racism in Europe, the

paper argued, this was concurrent with "an apparent increase of the feeling in recent years against the colored races."

39. Jack Gay interview, Living Atlanta Collection, box 22. The exact number of Jewish refugees who resettled in the South is unknown. Some three hundred families arrived in Atlanta between 1948 and the early 1960s. Ruth Schuster, "The Refugee Jewish Grocery Store Owner in the Black Ghetto of Atlanta," manuscript, n.d., Atlanta Jewish Community Center, 1.

40. Rabbi Albert Friedlander interview; Josephine Heyman, interviewed by Cliff Kuhn, Living Atlanta Collection. In a separate interview, Heyman reiterated this point, recalling how the refugees had opened her eyes to the suffering of African Americans: "We had just always taken it for granted that they were the servants, which they were when I grew up." Jewish Women of Achievement Oral History Project: Josephine Heyman, 68.

41. Kelly Miller, "Is America an Asylum for the Oppressed?" *Richmond Planet,* April 9, 1938; Kelly Miller, "Popular Election in Germany and America," *Richmond Planet,* April 23, 1938; "On Racial Prejudice at Home and Abroad," *Nashville Globe and Independent,* January 20, 1939; Jervis Anderson, *Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 82–83.

42. *Atlanta Daily World,* July 10, August 15, and August 19, 1938.

43. Shankman, "Friend or Foe?" 118; J. C. Fairley, interview with author, March 19, 1994.

44. J. L. LeFlore to Berney L. Strauss, October 12, 1938, Papers of the NAACP, part 12: selected branch files, 1913–39, series A: The South, reel 4, group 1, series G: Mobile, Alabama, branch.

45. *Richmond Planet,* April 16, 1938.

3. THE RESURGENCE OF SOUTHERN ANTI-SEMITISM

1. Deborah Dash Moore, "Separate Paths: Blacks and Jews in the Twentieth-Century South," in *Struggles in the Promised Land,* ed. Salzman and West, 280; Forman, "Unbearable Whiteness of Being Jewish," 125; Will Maslow, "The Bombings in the South," May 5, 1958, series 1, reel 3, 0721, Southern Regional Council Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University; Alfred O. Hero Jr., *The Southerner and World Affairs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 477. Southern Jews who lived in smaller towns and rural areas also tended to fall within the middle and upper income brackets. All forty-nine of the Jewish families in Gastonia, North Carolina, were deemed by Murray Friedman to be "enjoying middle class or better status in the community" during the 1950s. The heads of ten of the families worked in the textile industry; another thirty operated retail businesses. Murray Friedman, "Postscript to an Act of Violence," ADL *Bulletin* 15, no. 6 (June 1958): 5.

2. *Southern Jewish Weekly,* February 16, 1951; Julian B. Feibelman, *A Social and Economic Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1941), 134. The

Southern Jewish Weekly also fretted over the ever-increasing rate of intermarriage in its edition of May 11, 1951.

3. John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.* (1947; New York: New Press, 1997), 803; Forman, "Unbearable Whiteness of Being Jewish," 131.

4. Solomon Sutker, "The Jews of Atlanta: Their Social Structure and Leadership Patterns" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1950), 269; Noland Blass Sr., interview with Marvin Franklin, July 15, 1978, Oral History Collection, University of Arkansas at Little Rock (hereafter cited as UALR). Louis Volmer had served as an alderman of Little Rock for eighteen years and even as acting mayor. This, however, was at the turn of the century. On other aspects of assimilation, useful insights are provided by James Lebeau, "Profile of a Southern Jewish Community: Waycross, Georgia," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (June 1969): 431–34; Theodore Lowi, "Southern Jews." On intermarriage, see Sidney I. Goldstein, "Mixed Marriages in the Deep South," in *Jews in the South,* ed. Dinnerstein and Palsson, esp. 283–85; Feibelman, *A Social and Economic Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community,* 136.

5. *Florida Jewish News,* September 1936; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* June 11, 1954.

6. *Carolina Israelite,* November–December 1957, 12–13.

7. Pamela Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes: Women and Politics in New Orleans, 1920–1963* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 210.

8. Minutes of the Southern Interagency Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, January 13–14, 1959, box 24, file 640, South Carolina Council on Human Relations Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

9. Goldfield, *Region, Race, and Cities,* 160; David R. Goldfield, *Promised Land: The South since 1945* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1987), 52.

10. On the origins and activities of the White Citizens' Councils, see Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954–64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). Two journalistic assessments are James Graham Cook, *The Segregationists* (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1962), and John Bartlow Martin, *The Deep South Says "Never"* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1957).

11. "Southern Jews," *Crisis* 63, no. 10 (December 1956): 603; Joshua A. Fishman, "Southern City," *Midstream* 8, no. 3 (summer 1961), 45; David Halberstam, "The White Citizens' Councils," *Commentary* 22, no. 4 (October 1956): 301; Arthur J. Levin, "Since the Supreme Court Decision," *ADL Bulletin* 15, no. 6 (June 1958): 5; Bea Gotthelf interview. In his annual assessment of "The American Scene" in 1956, U.S. correspondent Monty Jacobs similarly informed the English readership of the *Jewish Chronicle* that southern Jews were increasingly fearful "as to what would happen to them if they did not align themselves with the White Citizens' Councils." *Jewish Chronicle,* August 31, 1956.

12. David L. Chappell, "The Divided Mind of Southern Segregationists," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (1998): 55–56, 59; Irwin Schulman to Alex Miller, Sep-

tember 19, 1958, box 1, folder 2, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith Records, 1946–82, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans.

13. *New York Times,* March 6, 1956; McMillen, *Citizens' Council,* 49–50.

14. Glen Jeansomme, *Leander Perez: Boss of the Delta* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 225–26, 236–37; McMillen, *Citizens' Council,* 69–70; Fairclough, *Race and Democracy,* 526 n.57; *Carolina Israelite,* November–December 1960; Milton Ellerin to Arnold Forster, November 25, 1960, box 1, folder 44, Mayer Newfield Papers, 1950–73, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

15. Robert B. Patterson to Will Maslow, October 9, 1956, Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 13, 00452; James Graham Cook, *The Segregationists,* 153–54; Martin, *The Deep South Says "Never,"* 15. Such was Patterson's sensitivity on the issue that he later employed a Jewish woman in his own office.

16. *New York Times,* December 2, 1956.

17. Eli N. Evans, *Provincials,* 318; Hero, *The Southerner and World Affairs,* 478; "The Sacred Pledge of the White Citizens' Church Council," copy in Citizens' Council files, Tulane University.

18. *Jewish Ledger,* March 15, 1956; Stan Opotowsky, "Inside the White Citizens' Council: Why Some Jews and Catholics Join Up," *Afro-American,* Afro Magazine Section, March 23, 1957; George S. Mitchell, executive director, to Arthur Levin, ADL southeastern regional director, September 21, 1956, series 1, reel 4, 0591–0592, Southern Regional Council Papers. See also Stanley Meisler, "The Southern Segregationist and His Anti-Semitism," *Chicago Jewish Forum* 16 (spring 1958): 171.

19. *American Jewish Yearbook* 52 (1951): 68.

20. Irwin Schulman, personal and confidential memorandum to Arnold Forster, June 7, 1963, box 6, folder 1, Women's Emergency Committee Papers, 1958–63, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock. The flood of anti-Semitic materials into the South was regularly reported by the Jewish press. Some of these news stories can be found in the *Southern Jewish Weekly* of November 6, 1957, June 27, 1958, and July 4, 1958.

21. Al Misegadis, "Jews, Integration, Segregation," and Clyde L. Barr, untitled handbill, box 48, folder 30, Jim Johnson Collection. Another anti-Semitic propagandist was "Pensacola's Little Hitler," a gas station owner who distributed hate sheets in the local vicinity. *Southern Jewish Weekly,* August 22, 1958.

22. Edwin J. Lukas (American Jewish Committee) to Roy Wilkins, December 19, 1956; Franklin H. Williams to Roy Wilkins, March 7, 1957; "The Aryan Views by Horace Sherman Miller," January 1957; Rev. Rudolph S. Rangel to Horace S. Miller, undated. All in Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 13.

23. Arnold Forster, "The South: New Field for an Old Game," *ADL Bulletin* 15, no. 8 (October 1958): 1; various anti-Semitic materials in box 46, folders 15 and 16, Ralph Emerson McGill Papers, 1898–1969, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

24. Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.*, 789; *Southern Jewish Weekly*, August 27, 1954.

25. "Stoner Anti-Jewish Party," undated leaflet, series 1, reel 130, 0261, Southern Regional Council Papers; *Thunderbolt*, February 1961; James Graham Cook, *Segregationists*, 167–68; George Thayer, *The Farther Shores of Politics: The American Political Fringe Today* (London: Allen Lane, 1968), 34–48; Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 344; Pat Watters, *Down to Now: Reflections on the Southern Civil Rights Movement* (1971; Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 282, 289.

26. Alex Rittenbaum, memorandums circulated to "Friends" of the Community Council, March 18 and April 6, 1964; Ted Roth to Ben Epstein, April 3, 1964; Jewish Community Council Papers, Linn-Henley Research Library.

27. James Graham Cook, *Segregationists*, 155–56; Thayer, *The Farther Shores of Politics*, 43–44; *Jewish Floridian*, April 22, 1960.

28. James Graham Cook, *Segregationists*, 157; *Birmingham Post Herald*, February 26, 1958; *Southern Jewish Weekly*, February 28, 1958; ADL *Facts* 13, no. 2 (April–May 1958): 117.

29. Report of Crommelin's address on WAPI, April 1962, box 1, folder 46, Mayer Newfield Papers.

30. *National Jewish Post and Opinion*, November 29, 1957; Albert Vorspan to I. Cyrus Gordon, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, March 3, 1958, "Attempted Dynamiting of North Carolina Synagogues," American Jewish Archives Small Collections. Panic again swept through the Jewish community in Charlotte following a fire on February 17 that destroyed the home of *Carolina Israelite* editor Harry Golden. Far from being another terrorist attack, however, the incident turned out to be the result of a defective furnace.

31. Vorspan to Gordon, March 3, 1958; Friedman, "Postscript to an Act of Violence," 5.

32. *New York Times*, March 17, 1958; *Miami Herald*, March 17, 1958; Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 176; Nathan Perlmutter, "Bombing in Miami: Anti-Semitism and the Segregationists," *Commentary* 25, no. 6 (June 1958): 498–99; Jackson Toby, "Bombing in Nashville: A Jewish Center and the Desegregation Struggle," *Commentary* 25, no. 5 (May 1958): 385.

33. *Southern Jewish Weekly*, May 2, 1958; *Richmond Afro-American*, May 3, 1958.

34. Irwin Schulman to Alex Miller, September 19, 1958; *National Jewish Post and Opinion*, October 31, 1958.

35. *New York Times*, October 16, 1958; *Southern Israelite*, October 17, 1958.

36. Maslow, "The Bombings in the South."

37. *New York Times*, April 29, 1958; Perlmutter, "Bombing in Miami," 499; Vorspan to Gordon, March 3, 1958; William B. Silverman, "We Will Not Yield," *Southern Israelite*, February 27, 1959.

38. *New York Times*, December 3, December 10, and December 26, 1951; *Southern Jewish Weekly*, December 7, 1951; Moore, *To the Golden Cities*, 153–54; Arthur J. Levin

of the ADL regional office in Atlanta, circular distributed to "Friends," August 15, 1952, box 46, folder 15, Ralph McGill Papers.

39. *New York Times,* March 17, 1958; Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild to Norman Goldburg, March 27, 1958, box 3, folder 9, Rothschild Papers; *Carolina Israelite,* January–February 1958.

40. *Miami Herald,* November 18, 1958.

41. *New York Times,* May 1, May 3, November 7, November 17, 1958; Oscar Cohen, "The South: How Much Anti-Semitism?" *ADL Bulletin* 16, no. 9 (November 1959): 6.

42. Vorspan to Gordon, March 3, 1958; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* November 29, 1957.

43. *Birmingham News,* April 29, and May 1, 1958; *Birmingham Post-Herald,* April 29, 30, 1958; *New York Times,* May 4, 1958; Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie,* 166–67; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* May 9 and May 16, 1958; April 22, 1960.

44. Paul Ginsburg to David Zeff, October 15, 1958, Temple Bombing 1958 file, Atlanta Jewish Community Archives.

45. *New York Times,* October 13, 1958; *Atlanta Constitution,* October 13 and October 14, 1958; Temple Bombing 1958 file; Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *One Voice: Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild and the Troubled South* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985), 82–83. Abhorrence at the temple bombing was expressed by other organizations, including the Atlanta Labor Council, the AFL-CIO, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews (all included in Temple Bombing 1958 file). The Rothschild Papers include some sixteen folders filled with letters of sympathy, many from ordinary Atlantans such as Daisy Day, who wrote that she and her husband had a number of Jewish friends, "whom we have loved and respected for many years. And we are so ashamed and humiliated that this had to happen." Daisy L. Day to Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, October 13, 1958, box 3, folder 10, Rothschild Papers.

46. Tom Strong to Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, October 16, 1958; William B. Hartsfield to Tom Strong, October 25, 1958, box 4, folder 4, Rothschild Papers.

47. *Birmingham Post-Herald,* May 5 and May 6, 1958.

48. *New York Times,* October 18, 1958; *ADL Facts,* 13, no. 2 (April–May 1958): 115–16; James Graham Cook, *Segregationists,* 157.

49. "The Trial of George M. Bright," *ADL Bulletin* 16, no. 2 (February 1959): 7; *Jewish Floridian,* January 30, 1959; Blumberg, *One Voice,* 99–107; Arnold Shankman, "A Temple Is Bombed—Atlanta, 1958," *American Jewish Archives* 23, no. 2 (November 1971), 131. A comprehensive account of the trial can be found in Melissa Fay Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996).

50. Julian Bond, interview with author, May 18, 1995; Janice Blumberg, interview with author, February 27, 1994.

51. Cecil Alexander, transcript of interview, 18, Atlanta Jewish Community Archives; P. Allen Krause, "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South, 1954–1967," *American Jewish Archives* 21 (April 1969): 39. This viewpoint was affirmed by Haskell L. Lazere, director

of the American Jewish Congress's southeastern regional office in Miami. In a letter to Edward M. Kahn, executive secretary of the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund, Lazere wrote, "It would seem to me that every bombing, as horrible as they are, brings the South that much closer to desegregation. I know that it nauseates the majority of Southerners, whom I believe to be basically decent and fair." Lazere to Kahn, October 15, 1958, Temple Bombing 1958 file.

52. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* February 21, 1958; William B. Silverman, Nearprint Box—Biographies, American Jewish Archives; Silverman, "We Will Not Yield," *Southern Jewish Weekly,* March 28 and April 11, 1958, April 25, 1960; Richard Yaffe, "Negro Integration and Jews in the South," *Israel Horizons* 6, no. 6 (June–July 1958): 18.

53. *Jewish Floridian,* July 24, 1959, January 15, 1960; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* January 15, 1960.

54. *Atlanta Daily World,* October 14 and 15, 1958.

55. *Richmond Afro-American,* March 29, 1958.

56. *Birmingham World,* May 3, 1958; *Richmond Afro-American,* March 22, 1958; Julian Bond interview. Similar sentiments were expressed by the *New York Age* in its edition of March 22, 1958. The paper urged African Americans to forge a firmer alliance with Jews in the wake of the bombings, concluding its appeal with the words "In unity there is strength."

57. *Atlanta Daily World,* October 21, 1958; Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild to Chaplain Bill Allison, December 5, 1958, box 5, folder 3, Rothschild Papers.

58. Gail Williams O'Brien, "'Return to Normalcy': Organized Racial Violence in the Post–World War II South," in *Violence in America: Protest, Rebellion, Reform,* ed. Tedd Robert Gurr (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989), 243–44.

59. Atlanta Baptist Association, resolution of October 16, 1958, box 4, folder 8, Rothschild Papers; *Atlanta Daily World,* October 18, October 19, and October 23, 1958.

60. *Birmingham World,* May 3, 1958; *Atlanta Daily World,* October 16, 1958.

61. Annie Moore to Ralph McGill, October 14, 1958, box 4, folder 1, Rothschild Papers; *New York Times,* December 27, 1951; Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1990,* 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1991), 44.

62. Cohen, "The South: How Much Anti-Semitism?"; Alexander interview.

4. PROTESTING AGAINST THE PROTESTERS

1. Berson, *Negroes and the Jews,* 81.

2. Moore, *To the Golden Cities,* 11; Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 134–40.

3. *Southern Jewish Weekly,* May 28, 1954; Michael B. Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements, 1954–1973*

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 19; Union of American Hebrew Congregations, statement of principles adopted by 43d General Assembly in Los Angeles, February 15, 1955; Synagogue Council of America, statement by Dr. Abraham J. Feldman, president of the Council, formally ratified by the plenary body of the Council on April 11, 1956; Resolution of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, adopted June 1956, Alabama Council on Human Relations: subject files, box 3, folder 38, "Religious Bodies and the Supreme Court Decision," July 31, 1957, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library.

4. Anderson, *Bayard Rustin,* 209; Clayborne Carson, "Black-Jewish Universalism in the Era of Identity Politics," in *Struggles in the Promised Land,* ed. Salzman and West, 180.

5. Among those who attempted to dissuade the ADL was a small delegation from Charlotte, North Carolina. Levinson, "Different Lives in a Different Region," 48.

6. Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 151.

7. Hodding Carter, "How Desegregation Affects Southern Jewry," *Southern Jewish Weekly,* January 31, 1958.

8. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* March 30, 1956; *Birmingham News,* October 21, 1954.

9. "New Orleans and the Jews," *Carolina Israelite,* November–December 1960; *New York Times,* September 26, 1959.

10. James W. Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964), 40; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* March 23, 1956; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* November 6, 1959.

11. Silver, *Mississippi,* 65.

12. "The Rabbit Brothers," copy of ADL booklet in author's possession; Label A. Katz, "The State of the Bigot," *ADL Bulletin* 15, no. 6 (June 1958): 7; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* September 21 and September 28, 1956.

13. *Southern Israelite,* September 26, 1958; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* September 26, 1958; Oscar Cohen to Roy Wilkins, July 24, 1958, Papers of the NAACP, part 21, reel 13, 00363–00364; Murray Friedman, "One Episode in Southern Jewry's Response to Desegregation: An Historical Memoir," *American Jewish Archives* 33 (November 1981): 172–81.

14. Noland Blass Sr., interview with Marvin Franklin, July 15, 1978, Oral History Collection, UALR; *Southern Israelite,* December 13, 1957.

15. Hero, *The Southerner and World Affairs,* 475; Yaffe, "Negro Integration and Jews in the South," 30.

16. Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 157–58.

17. Minutes of the National Commission on Community Interrelations, July 12, 1956, series 1, reel 3, 0097, Southern Regional Council Papers; Al Vorspan, "Birmingham Revisited," *Conservative Judaism* (fall 1993): 60; Mayer Newfield to Arthur J.

Levin, January 5, 1961, Newfield Papers. Vorspan received another antagonistic response from Birmingham's Jews, who, he claims, only wanted to know two things: "Who needs you here? And how quickly can you leave?"

18. Edwin Dunaway, interview with author, June 13, 1994.

19. Declaration of Selma's B'nai B'rith membership, January 25, 1956, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Alabama Regional Office, records, 1945–79, box 1, folder 32, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library.

20. Arthur J. Levin to Arthur Lewis, October 30, 1958, ibid.; Benjamin Muse, confidential memorandum, October 18, 1961: Alabama, September 15–17 and October 2–5, 1954, series 1, reel 56, document 1842, Southern Regional Council Papers.

21. *Montgomery Journal,* January 22, 1963; Richard Rosenberg, telephone interview with author.

22. Herbert R. Moulitz, report, 1957–58 [March 15, 1958], box 1, folder 2, Anti-Defamation League Records, Tulane. The friend of the court brief was later refused by the Supreme Court without any stated reasons.

23. Friedman interview; Fishman, "Southern City," 42.

24. Lebeau, "Profile of a Southern Jewish Community," 434–35, 442; Malev, "The Jew of the South," 37. The David Emmanuel Lodge's decision was determined both by a fear that local Jews were "being jeopardized by the outspoken position of the national office" and by the fact that a majority of its members were "opposed to integration."

25. Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906–1966* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 393.

26. Leonel Weil to Charles J. Bloch, January 16, 1959, box 19, folder 91, Charles J. Bloch Papers, Macon Public Library; Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 162.

27. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1994), 1:469–70.

28. *Birmingham Post-Herald,* June 6, 1961. New Orleans Jews expressed similar opposition to the Freedom Rides. See Lawrence N. Powell, "When Hate Came to Town: New Orleans' Jews and George Lincoln Rockwell," *American Jewish History* 85, no. 4 (December 1997): 401.

29. Albert Vorspan, "In St. Augustine," *Midstream* 3 (September 1964): 18–20; Branch, *Pillar of Fire,* 354–56.

30. Friedlander interview.

31. On the story of the Freedom Summer, see Len Holt, *The Summer That Didn't End* (New York: William Morrow, 1965).

32. Lil Burnstein, interview with author, March 12, 1994; Nossiter, *Of Long Memory,* 204; Bob and Sue Cohen et al., "A Public Dialogue—Jewish Young Freedom Fighters and the Role of the Jewish Community: An Evaluation," *Jewish Currents* 19 (July–August 1965): 14–15.

33. *Hattiesburg American,* July 7, 1964; Mary Aickin Rothschild, *A Case of Black and White: Northern Volunteers and the Southern Freedom Summers, 1964–1965* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 106–7.

34. *Hattiesburg American,* July 10, 1964; Elizabeth Sutherland, ed., *Letters from Mississippi* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 122–24; Branch, *Pillar of Fire,* 394, 446, 447.

35. Marvin Reuben, Maury Gurwitch, and Lou Ginsberg, interviews with the author, March 18, 1995.

36. Ginsberg interview.

37. *Hattiesburg American,* July 13, July 18, 1964; Sutherland, *Letters from Mississippi,* 125–26.

38. The murder of the three project workers has received enormous coverage, including two films: *Mississippi Burning* and the more historically accurate *Murder in Mississippi.* For written accounts, see William Bradford Huie, *Three Lives for Mississippi* (New York: WCC Books, 1965); Jack Mendelsohn, *The Martyrs* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); and Seth Cagin and Philip Dray, *We Are Not Afraid: The Story of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney and the Civil Rights Campaign for Mississippi* (New York: Macmillan, 1988).

39. Moore, "Separate Paths," 283; Eli N. Evans, *Provincials,* 326; Marvin Reuben, interview with author, March 18, 1994; Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *Jews and the New American Scene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 155; Esther Shemper, interview with author, March 18, 1994.

40. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* November 22, 1957, June 29, 1956; Will Maslow, "My Brother's Keeper: Negro-Jewish Relations in the United States," *World Jewry* 1, no. 2 (1958): 6.

41. Irwin Schulman to Mrs. D. L. Menkus, 28 April 1960, box 6, folder 1: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Women's Emergency Committee Papers, 1958–1963, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock. Schulman of the ADL south-central regional office wrote to a Jewish member of Women's Emergency Committee shortly before a visit to Little Rock, offering "to make myself available to you and other leaders of the Women's Emergency Committee . . . at your convenience." The Little Rock section of the ADL considered it potentially counterproductive to offer its formal services to the committee, since to do so would attract anti-Semitic publicity. Its members did nevertheless operate within the committee in an individual capacity. Schulman to Mrs. Heber Helvenston, February 2, 1959; Betty Rosen to Irene Samuel, June 23, 1961, box 6, folder 1, Women's Emergency Committee Papers.

42. Paul E. Mertz, "'Mind Changing Time All over Georgia': HOPE, Inc., and School Desegregation, 1958–1961," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (spring 1993): 41–46, 50, 53. Mertz points out that HOPE's Frances Pauley developed contacts between the organization and B'nai B'rith, but he does not explore the nature of the relationship between the two.

43. Unsigned document, October 13, 1958, Gen-13, Arkansas/Little Rock: Integra-

tion folder, 48–62, American Jewish Committee Papers, Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, New York; Gaba, "Segregation and a Southern Jewish Community," 12. Jerome S. Levy, president of the American Jewish Committee chapter in Little Rock, later admitted, "We were disturbed by statements made by the Anti-Defamation League during the integration difficulties in Little Rock. These did not help us, as Jews." Jerome S. Levy to Jack Dante, January 5, 1960, Gen-13, Arkansas/Little Rock: Integration folder, 48–62, American Jewish Committee Papers.

44. Charles Wittenstein, memorandums to A. Harold Murray, February 2 and March 18, 1960, Gen-13, Georgia: 44-60, American Jewish Committee Papers; Mertz, "'Mind Changing Time All over Georgia,'" 52–56.

45. Charles Wittenstein, memorandums to Max Birnbaum, December 21, 1960, May 25, 1962, Gen-13, Georgia: Integration folder, 50–62, American Jewish Committee Papers, Yivo Institute.

46. Charles F. Wittenstein, "Jews, Justice, and Liberalism," *New South* 20 (July–August 1965): 16; Charles Wittenstein, interview with author, November 18, 1993; Charles Wittenstein to A. Harold Murray, August 29, 1961, Gen-13, Georgia: Integration, American Jewish Committee Papers.

5. JEWISH MERCHANTS: CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

1. Whitfield, *Voices of Jacob.*

2. The emergence of the direct action movement has been explored by a number of historians. Two of the finest accounts are William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

3. I should stress here that my intention is not to offer a detailed account of events during the demonstrations in each city but to assess the response of Jewish merchants to those events. The narratives included here should be regarded only as superficial sketches.

4. My discussion in these opening paragraphs of the background to the boycott is taken from Jack L. Walker, "Sit-ins in Atlanta: A Study in the Negro Revolt," in *Atlanta, Georgia, 1960–1981: Sit-Ins and Student Activism,* ed. David J. Garrow (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1989), 63–72; and David A. Harmon, "Beneath the Image: The Civil Rights Movement and Race Relations in Atlanta, Georgia, 1946–1981" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1993), 261–82.

5. Leon Harris, *Merchant Princes: An Intimate History of Jewish Families Who Built Great Department Stores* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 136–37.

6. *Atlanta Journal,* November 30, 1960; Eliza Paschall to Richard H. Rich, December 21, 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, box 37, folder 3. See also Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 292.

7. Jesse Hill Jr. to Richard H. Rich, March 10, 1958; Margaret Young and Jesel Simon to Rich, April 14, 1958, Richard H. Rich Papers, box 37, folder 1.

8. Harmon, "Beneath the Image," 279–80; Walker, "Sit-ins in Atlanta," 75–76.

9. *Rich Bits,* 1957, 1958; *Rich's News Bits,* April 1961, series 3, box 47, folders 12, 13, and 14, Rich Papers.

10. Leon Harris, *Merchant Princes,* 152.

11. *Atlanta Daily World,* June 25, 1960; Cecil Alexander, interview with author, November 14, 1993.

12. Julian Bond, interview with author, May 18, 1995.

13. Walker, "Sit-ins in Atlanta," 75–76; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1988), 141–42; Ivan Allen Jr. with Paul Hemphill, *Mayor: Notes on the Sixties* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 35–36.

14. Harmon, "Beneath the Image," 281–84; *Atlanta Daily World,* October 20, October 21, 1960.

15. Walker, "Sit-ins in Atlanta," 79–81; Harmon, "Beneath the Image," 285–91; *Atlanta Daily World,* October 25, November 26, November 29, and December 3, 1960.

16. *Atlanta Daily World,* March 8, 1961.

17. Sam Strauss, transcript of oral interview, n.d., Oral History Collection, UALR; LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 112–16, 379–83. Despite her occasional focus upon the Little Rock crisis, LeMaster rather oddly ignores the boycott. Instead she concentrates her attentions on the gradual decline of the downtown business district.

18. Irene Samuel, interview with author, June 9, 1994.

19. Joe and Carolyn Tenenbaum interview; Ozell Sutton, interview with author, October 26, 1993; Rabbi Elijah Palnick, telephone interview with author, February 28, 1994; Nat Griswold, "The Second Reconstruction in Little Rock, Book Two: Trauma of Change," manuscript, copy in possession of author, 25.

20. Dan Phillips, interview with author, June 15, 1994; Samuel interview.

21. *Arkansas Gazette,* March 11, 1960. Irving Spitzberg incorrectly identifies the date of this incident as having been April 1960. Irving J. Spitzberg, *Racial Politics in Little Rock, 1954–1964* (New York: Garland, 1987), 132.

22. *Arkansas Gazette,* April 16, April 21, and April 22, 1960, January 1, 1961; Rabbi Elijah Palnick interview; Irene Samuel interview; Joe and Carolyn Tenenbaum interview.

23. Dan Phillips interview; *Arkansas Gazette,* January 1, 1961.

24. This is in no way intended as a comprehensive account of the Birmingham boycott. For more richly documented renditions of events, see Michael Cooper Nichols, "'Cities Are What Men Make Them': Birmingham, Alabama, Faces the Civil Rights Movement, 1963" (senior honors thesis, Brown University, 1974); Robert G. Corley, "The Quest for Racial Harmony: Race Relations in Birmingham, Alabama, 1947–

1963" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1979); Glenn T. Eskew, "But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle" (Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 1993); David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* 231–64.

25. Corley, "Quest for Racial Harmony," 231–34; Nichols, "'Cities Are What Men Make Them,'" 159–62; George R. Osborne, "Boycott in Birmingham," *Nation,* May 5, 1962, 400.

26. Pizitz interview; Mervyn H. Sterne, memoir, 1981, Sterne Archives, Mervyn H. Sterne Library, University of Alabama at Birmingham.

27. Robert G. Corley, *Paying "Civic Rent": The Jews of Emanu-El and the Birmingham Community* (Birmingham: A. H. Cather, 1982).

28. Rev. Frank Dukes, interview with author, February 10, 1994. Local civil rights leader Edward Gardner similarly says of Hess that "he knew right from wrong." Rev. Edward Gardner, interview with author, February 8, 1994.

29. David Vann, "The Change from Commission to Mayor-Council Government and the Racial Desegregation Agreements in Birmingham, Alabama, 1961–1963," paper prepared for the Center for Urban Affairs, University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1988; David Matis, "Birmingham Diary: A Reporter's Observations," *Jewish Currents* 17 (July–August 1963): 14.

30. Branch, *Parting the Waters,* 645–46; Eskew, "But for Birmingham," 276.

31. Corley, "Quest for Racial Harmony," 319–24; David Vann, "Outline of Negotiations," box 2, folder 24, David J. Vann Papers, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library.

32. Nichols, "'Cities Are What Men Make Them,'" 164–65; Dukes interview.

33. Nichols, "'Cities Are What Men Make Them,'" 167; Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* 141; *Atlanta Daily World,* November 25, 1960.

34. Corley, "Quest for Racial Harmony," 53–69; Robert Corley, "In Search of Racial Harmony: Birmingham Business Leaders and Desegregation, 1950–1963," in *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation,* ed. Elizabeth Jacoway and David R. Colburn (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 174–75; "Statement," March 1, 1956, Jefferson County Coordinating Council of Social Forces Interracial Committee, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library. Sterne's support for such proposals as the need for black police officers is included in the minutes of the executive committee meeting on November 4, 1953.

35. Mervyn H. Sterne to Congressman George Huddleston Jr. [undated], 132.2.1.1.19, Mervyn H. Sterne Papers, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library; Sterne to Mayor Arthur J. Hanes, December 16, 1961, box 4, folder 9, Sterne Papers; B. A. Monaghan to Sterne, December 14, 1961, box 4, folder 3, Sterne Papers.

36. *Birmingham Post-Herald,* December 5, 1960; William P. Engel to Dr John Bryan, executive vice president, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, August 28, 1961,

box 3 (Racial Comments), National Conference of Christians and Jews, Alabama Region Papers, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library; *Birmingham News,* January 8, 1962.

37. William P. Engel, transcript of oral interview, Birmingham, Alabama, 1971, 96–97, 105, American Jewish Archives Small Collections.

38. Branch, *Parting the Waters,* 643; James A. Colaiaco, *Martin Luther King Jr.: Apostle of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 55; Charles Wittenstein, interview with author, 18 November 1993.

39. For details of the Citizens' Council boycott, see chapter 7.

40. Allen, *Mayor,* 39; Walker, "Sit-ins in Atlanta," 81–82. The Birmingham merchants shared much the same fears as Rich. As Dr. Lucius Pitts, president of Miles College, put it, although they "seemed profoundly interested in helping us," they also "expressed a strong fear of being boycotted by the white customers, if facilities were desegregated." Osborne, "Boycott in Birmingham," 400.

41. Richard H. Rich to Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, October 15, 1958, series 2, box 23, folder 18, Richard H. Rich Papers; *Thunderbolt,* August 1961; Charles Wittenstein to George Kellman, August 14, 1961, Georgia: "Hate and Violence" folder, American Jewish Committee Papers, YIVO Institute.

42. Charles Wittenstein, interview with author.

43. Sutton interview; Phillips interview; Palnick interview; Spitzberg, *Racial Politics in Little Rock,* 142–45.

44. Indeed there is evidence to suggest that anti-Semitic materials had begun to circulate several months before the *Brown* ruling. At a meeting of the Interracial Committee of the Coordinating Council of Social Forces in February 1954, members learned that "race hatred literature" had been distributed throughout the city by the Christian Anti-Jewish Party, and they were asked to ignore such material. Papers of the Jefferson County Coordinating Council of Social Forces Interracial Committee.

45. "TRUTH," October 20, 1957; monthly program reports, May, July, August, September 1957, box 3, Papers of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Alabama Region, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham Public Library.

46. James A. Head Sr., James L. Permutt, and William S. Pritchard, chairmen of the Alabama Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, circular addressed "To Contributors in the Alabama Region," November 14, 1957; monthly program reports for 1957; box 3, Papers of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Alabama Region.

47. The attempted dynamiting of Temple Beth-El is detailed in chapter 3.

48. Arnold Forster and Arthur J. Levin to Alex Miller and Oscar Cohen, November 7, 1956; "Whiteman—Stand Up!"; "Birmingham Daily Bulletin," July 29, 1963, Anti-Defamation League records, Birmingham.

49. *Arkansas Gazette,* January 27, 1963; Sam Strauss, transcript of oral interview; Griswold, "The Second Reconstruction in Little Rock," 26–27.

50. *Arkansas Gazette,* July 17, 1963; "Boycott Negro Intrusion," flyer found in car, June 20, 1963, box 18, folder 5, Women's Emergency Committee Papers, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock.

51. Blach interview; David Vann, interview with author, February 10, 1994; Pizitz interview; Tom Gordon, "The First Black Clerks," *Birmingham News,* June 24, 1961.

52. Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild to Richard H. Rich, March 9, 1961, box 5, folder 8, Rothschild Papers; Rothschild interview.

53. Alexander interview; Goldstein, interview with author.

54. Mervyn H. Sterne to Herbert L. Block, undated; Sterne to George G. Seibels Jr., March 31, 1964, Sterne Papers, 132.2.1.1.19; Dorah Sterne, memoir, 1981, 9, Sterne Library, University of Alabama at Birmingham.

55. Harold B. Blach Jr., interview with author, February 15, 1994; Jerome Cooper, interview with author, February 9, 1994; Friedman interview.

56. Wittenstein interview; Julian Bond interview.

57. Monroe Schlactus to Nate Perlmutter, September 2, 1964, box 1, folder 11, Anti-Defamation League records, Birmingham.

58. Dukes interview; Gardner interview. Jewish lawyer Karl Friedman concurs that anti-Semitism never became a motivating force. The focus of the demonstrations, he observes, was on the department stores "as institutions, not the fact that they were owned by Jewish people." Friedman interview.

59. Harmon, "Beneath the Image," 314–17.

60. Goldstein interview.

61. Goldstein interview; *Atlanta Jewish Times,* April 17, 1992.

62. Eugene Patterson, "Atlanta and the Negro," *Atlanta Constitution,* January 7, 1964.

63. *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* January 1, 1964; *Atlanta Constitution,* January 3, 1964; *Baltimore Afro-American,* January 25, 1964; Harmon, "Beneath the Image," 324.

64. *Atlanta Daily World,* January 5, January 7, and January 21, 1964.

65. The other establishments owned by Lebco were a second deli and liquor store, both situated on Broad Street NW; a sandwich shop on Peachtree Road NW; and restaurants inside the King's Inn and Downtown Motel. *Atlanta City Directories,* 1950 and 1963.

66. Paul Good, *The Trouble I've Seen: White Journalist/Black Movement* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1975), 25–26; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* June 15, 1962; Julian Bond interview.

67. Good, *The Trouble I've Seen,* 26. On the central importance of Leb's to the sit-in campaign, see *New York Times,* January 28, 1964.

68. *Atlanta Constitution,* January 27, 1964.

69. *Atlanta Constitution,* January 27, 1964; *New York Times,* January 27, 1964;

Danny Lyons, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 124.

70. *Atlanta Constitution,* January 28, 1964; *New York Times,* January 28, 1964.

71. *Atlanta Constitution,* January 29, 1964.

72. *Atlanta Constitution,* January 30, 1964; *New York Times,* February 1, 1964.

73. *New York Times,* February 2, and February 3, 1964; *Baltimore Afro-American,* February 8, 1964; Alexander interview; Lester Garfield Maddox, *Speaking Out: The Autobiography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 52–54; Bruce Galphin, *The Riddle of Lester Maddox* (Atlanta: Camelot, 1968), 99.

74. Goldstein interview.

75. Wittenstein interview; Wittenstein, "Jews, Justice, and Liberalism," 15; Bill Breman, transcript of oral interview, January 7, 1990, 35, Atlanta Jewish Community Archives; Blumberg, *One Voice,* 171.

6. JEWISH SEGREGATIONISTS

1. Pat Watters, *The South and the Nation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 299; Jim Johnson Collection, box 40, folder 16. My search for comparable records on Citizens' Council membership proved unsuccessful.

2. Halberstam, "The White Citizens Councils," 301; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* March 21, 1958.

3. Hodding Carter III, *The South Strikes Back* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959); *Jackson Daily News* quoted in *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* March 23, 1956. Such remarks contradict the comment made by Harry Golden that segregationists regarded "white-supremacy opinions from a Jew as the expression of a 'defector' from the ranks of the enemy." *Carolina Israelite,* January–February 1966.

4. Wax, "The Attitude of the Jews in the South toward Integration," 17; Nossiter, *Of Long Memory,* 203; *Atlanta Constitution,* November 9, 1981; Ed King, interview with author, March 23, 1994.

5. Stephan Lesher, *George Wallace: American Populist* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1993), 69; Opotowsky, "Inside the White Citizens' Council"; Yitzchak Kerem, "The Settlement of Rhodian and Other Sephardic Jews in Montgomery and Atlanta in the Twentieth Century," *American Jewish History* 85, no. 4 (December 1997): 382.

6. Anonymous to Feibelman, April 26, 1960, box 29, folder 5, Julian B. Feibelman Papers, Manuscript Collection, American Jewish Archives.

7. Anonymous, *A Jewish View on Segregation* (Greenwood, Miss.: Association of Citizens' Councils, 1957).

8. Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice like a Trumpet,* 39–40, 43.

9. *Southern Jewish Weekly,* January 4, 1957; Opotowsky, "Inside the White Citizens' Council."

10. Hero, *The Southerner and World Affairs,* 483.

11. Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 164.

12. John K. Cauthen, *Speaker Blatt: His Challenges Were Greater* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan, 1965); Eli N. Evans, *Provincials,* 140–60.

13. Robert Cook, *Sweet Land of Liberty? The African American Struggle for Civil Rights in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1998), 89; Timothy D. Renick, "Solomon Blatt: An Examination into the Conservative Racial Views of a Jewish Politician in the Deep South, 1937–1986" (master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1989), 28, 33; Martin, *Deep South Says "Never,"* 167.

14. Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 538–39; John G. Sproat, "'Firm Flexibility': Perspectives on Desegregation in South Carolina," in *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America,* ed. Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 170–71, 164.

15. Edgar, *South Carolina,* 543; *Augusta Chronicle,* March 24, 1966, 2A; *Charlotte Observer,* March 24, 1966, 8A; *The State,* March 24, 1966, 1A, 13A; *Greenville News,* undated, unboxed scrapbook 1966, Solomon Blatt Papers, 1918–86, Modern Political Collections, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

16. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 67.

17. Anonymous to Blatt, August 7, 1964; Blatt to I. Dequincy Newman, August 13, 1964; Newman to Blatt, August 19, 1964. All box 8, file 338, Blatt Papers; *Life,* February 6, 1956.

18. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 1–2; George D. Terry and Catherine Wilson Horne, *The Bridge Builder: Solomon Blatt Reflects on a Lifetime of Service to South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: McKissick Museum, 1986), 1.

19. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 3; Goldfield, *Promised Land,* 37; David S. Mann, "Sol Blatt Interviews: Celebrating the Fiftieth Year of Public Service in South Carolina Legislative Politics, February 11 and March 25, 1982," 2, box 8, file 349, Blatt Papers.

20. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 15.

21. Ibid., 17–18.

22. *Gaines ex rel. Canada v Missouri.* For more details, see Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954–1965* (New York: Viking, 1987), 11, 14–15.

23. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 22.

24. Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 145–46; Sproat, "Firm Flexibility," 167; Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 25; *Greenville Piedmont,* November 26, 1951, 4; Martin, *Deep South Says "Never,"* 55.

25. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 30–33; Sproat, "Firm Flexibility," 167; Martin, *Deep South Says "Never,"* 68, 167.

26. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 42–46.

27. *Charlotte Observer,* March 25, 1966.

28. Address by the Hon. Solomon Blatt, Speaker, S.C. House of Representatives,

January 19, 1967, 9–10; *Greenville News,* January 11, 1967; *Charlotte Observer,* February 9, February 14, and March 1, 1967.

29. Edgar, *South Carolina,* 544.

30. Benjamin Muse, confidential memorandum, 2; Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 128–30.

31. Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 31–34; *Montgomery Advertiser,* March 26, 1992; Alvin Benn, interview with author, March 1, 1994.

32. *Montgomery Advertiser,* December 18, 1988; Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 55. Bloom conceals Tepper's identity by referring to him as "Siegel." He is, however, evidently referring to the same man.

33. Stephen L. Longenecker, *Selma's Peacemaker: Ralph Smeltzer and Civil Rights Mediation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 17; Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound,* 128.

34. *Selma-Times Journal,* September 27, 1963.

35. David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 31–34; Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound,* 128–30.

36. Howell Raines, *My Soul Is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered* (New York: Penguin, 1983), 312.

37. *Selma Times-Journal,* February 11, February 15, 1965.

38. Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound,* 135–36; *New York Times,* February 19, 1965.

39. *New York Times,* March 8, 1965.

40. *Selma Times-Journal,* March 8, 1965.

41. *Selma Times-Journal,* March 10, 1965; Charles E. Fager, *Selma, 1965* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 107–9; Garrow, *Protest at Selma,* 91–92, 97; Longenecker, *Selma's Peacemaker,* 179.

42. *Selma Times-Journal,* March 15 and March 16, 1965.

43. Longenecker, *Selma's Peacemaker,* 180; *Selma Times-Journal,* March 14 and March 21, 1965. The *Times-Journal* argued of Reeb: "No matter that his presence in Selma was one of an unwelcomed, uninvited delegation of clerics taking part in the current racial demonstrations[,] his right to walk our streets lawfully and unmolested was no less equal to the same privilege accorded other individuals to do so in safety."

44. "Ten Big Questions Regarding the Death of Reverend Reeb in Selma, Alabama." A copy of this and other related documents was supplied to the author by Dan Carter. The original is filed in the folder labeled "Civil Rights: Selma," George Wallace Papers, Alabama State Archives, Montgomery, Alabama.

45. "Dear ———," letter signed by Sol H. Tepper, January 3, 1966. Once again I am grateful to Dan Carter for supplying me with this material.

46. Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945–1948* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 352–55.

47. Ibid., 403, 406.

48. Robert Mann, *The Walls of Jericho: Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Russell, and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1996), 44; Joseph L. Bernd, "Georgia: Static and Dynamic," in *The Changing Politics of the South,* ed. William C. Havard (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), 314; *Atlanta Constitution,* July 15, 1948; Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis,* 406.

49. These biographical details, along with those which follow, are taken from the introductory outline provided with the index to the Charles J. Bloch Papers, Macon Public Library.

50. Gilbert C. Fite, *Richard B. Russell Jr., Senator from Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Senator Samuel J. Ervin Jr., oral history, #65, 8, Richard B. Russell Collection, Richard B. Russell Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.

51. Col. M. Alston Keith to Bloch, inviting him to speak at a meeting of the Dallas County, Alabama, Citizens' Council, May 5, 1956, box 15, folder 69, Bloch Papers; W. J. Simmons, editor of the *Citizen,* to Bloch, April 1, 1963, box 28, folder 122, Bloch Papers; McMillen, *Citizens' Council,* 82–84, 117–18.

52. Bloch to Russell, June 2, 1964, series 6.E: Charles J. Bloch, Richard B. Russell Collection.

53. *Georgia Bar Journal,* November 1962; Charles J. Bloch, *States' Rights: The Law of the Land* (Atlanta: Harrison, 1958), vii.

54. Statement of Charles J. Bloch before the Senate Judiciary Committee, March 28, 1960, with respect to H.R. 8601, copy enclosed with letter of Bloch to Russell, January 19, 1960; Bloch to Russell, March 3, 1960 and September 1, 1966. All letters, series 6.E, Richard B. Russell Collection. Other examples of Bloch's offering advice can be found in Bloch to Russell, July 5, 1957, series 6.E, Richard B. Russell Collection; Charles Bloch to Herman E. Talmadge, May 9, 1958, series 3: Civil Rights Series, 1957–74. box 15, folder 1: Charles Bloch, Herman E. Talmadge Collection, Richard B. Russell Library.

55. *Atlanta Journal,* August 29, 1956; *Atlanta Constitution,* August 30, 1956.

56. J. Morgan Kousser, *Colorblind Injustice: Minority Voting Rights and the Undoing of the Second Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 200–202, 484 n.2.

57. Abram, *The Day Is Short,* 48–49; Kousser, *Colorblind Injustice,* 203–5.

58. Bernd, "Georgia," 300–302; Abram, *The Day Is Short,* 94; Bloch to Emanuel Celler, September 7, 1962, box 27, folder 118, Bloch Papers. The idea that Bloch fashioned himself after the Confederate secretary of state and of war had some substance. At one point he had evidently encouraged Congressman Emanuel Celler to suggest the idea of a Benjamin biopic to a group of Hollywood executives. He even went so far as to imagine Elizabeth Taylor in the role of Benjamin's wife. As with so many of his plans, the idea, much to Bloch's sorrow, failed to reach fruition. "It would have been a natural," he later remarked.

59. Bloch to Bell, April 21, 1958, series 6.E, Richard B. Russell Collection. Bloch had formulated his plan several months earlier, in September or October 1957. His attempts to restrict Democratic Party membership were, according to one observer, "calculated to be repugnant and restrictive to Negro voters." Samuel Lubin to Ed Lukas, November 6, 1957, Gen-13, 52-60, American Jewish Committee Papers, Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, New York.

60. Bernd, "Georgia," 316; *Nashville Tennessean,* June 29, 1956; Bloch to William Ott, editor of the *Macon Telegraph,* November 1, 1962, box 27, folder 119, Bloch Papers; Mann, *The Walls of Jericho,* 274.

61. Bloch to Talmadge, October 21, 1957, series 3, box 15, folder 1, Herman E. Talmadge Collection; Newell Eden Field, president, to members of the Georgia Bar Association's board of governors, August 3, 1959, series 6.E, Richard B. Russell Collection.

62. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 14; Mann interview with Blatt, 5, 23; Morris N. Kertzer, *Today's American Jew* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 271.

63. Mann interview, 5, 4; Terry and Horne, *The Bridge Builder,* 8; Governor Robert McNair Oral History Project, interview with Solomon Blatt by C. Blease Graham, January 18, 1980, 4, box 8, file 348, Blatt Papers; Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 1, 13–14.

64. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 17–18; address delivered to the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston, South Carolina, by the Hon. Solomon Blatt, April 6, 1959, 6–7, 8, box 5, file 216, Blatt Papers; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* April 24, 1959. Blatt made a similarly complacent assertion about the condition of African Americans in an address to the Barnwell chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy in 1960. "I doubt," he boasted, "that there are as many Negro people in any other state of the nation who enjoy the privileges of driving their own automobile, and of conducting their own businesses, and being taught by teachers of their own kind." Box 5, file 217, Solomon Blatt Papers.

65. Concurrent Resolution of the House and Senate, April 17, 1959, box 5, file 216, Blatt Papers. See also James F. Byrnes to Blatt, April 7, 1959, and T. R. Waring to Ethel Blatt, April 13, 1959, box 1, file 26, Blatt Papers; *Charleston Evening Post,* April 8, 1959; *Sumter County News,* April 23, 1959.

66. *Augusta Chronicle,* April 8 and May 4, 1959, 1; *Augusta Courier,* April 20, 1959, 1.

67. Sol Tepper, telephone interview with author, February 28, 1994; Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 57–59.

68. Bloch to Golden, May 1, 1956, box 15, folder 67, Bloch Papers.

69. Address delivered to the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Charleston, S.C., 6–7.

70. Bloch to Walter Bragg Jr. of the *Macon News,* March 27, 1950, box 11, folder 53, Bloch Papers.

71. Bloch to Golden, May 1, 1956.

72. Bloch to Myer O. Sigal, October 31, 1962; Bloch to Burk Klein, November 8, 1962, box 27, folder 119, Bloch Papers.

73. *Selma Times-Journal,* March 9, 1965; *Southern Israelite,* March 26 and April 2, 1965.

74. *Southern Israelite,* April 2 and April 9, 1965. For reaction to Bloody Sunday, see Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* 400.

75. Raines, *My Soul Is Rested,* 315; Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 61.

76. Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 34; Raines, *My Soul Is Rested,* 313–14.

77. Bloch to Russell, Talmadge, and Vandiver, February 26, 1959, series 6.E, Richard B. Russell Collection; *Georgia Tribune,* February 12, 1959.

78. Bloch to Russell, Talmadge, and Vandiver, February 26, 1959.

79. Talmadge to Bloch, May 5, 1958, box 18, folder 85, Bloch Papers.

80. *Southern Israelite,* April 1, 1960; *Jewish Floridian,* April 1, 1960.

81. Charles Bloch, supplemental statement on the Gadsden bombing, undated, series 6.E, Richard B. Russell Collection.

82. *Montgomery Journal,* January 22, 1963.

83. Charles Bloch to Nathan Gans, October 21, 1961, box 25, folder 110, Bloch Papers; Charles Bloch to Tom E. Greene Jr., July 3, 1962, box 26, folder 115, Bloch Papers.

84. Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 54; Benjamin Muse, confidential memorandum, Alabama, September 15–17 and October 2–5, 1954, series 1, reel 56, document 1842, Southern Regional Council Papers; Opotowsky, "Inside the White Citizens' Council."

85. Alston Fitts III, *Selma: Queen City of the Black Belt* (Selma, Ala.: Clairmont Press, 1989), 14.

86. Mayor Joe Smitherman, telephone interview with author, March 1, 1994; Richard Rosenberg, telephone interview with author, March 2, 1994; Bloom, "Attitudes of Selma Jews," 71.

87. Renick, "Solomon Blatt," 77.

88. John M. Elliott to Bloch, October 8, 1968, box 35, folder 162, Charles J. Bloch Papers.

89. Muriel Lewis, interview with author, March 1, 1994; Sol Tepper interview.

7. FEMALE REFORMERS

1. National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section Papers, box 5: Desegregation in Schools folder, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University; Jane Buchsbaum, transcript of oral interview, November 28, 1978, Kim Lacy Rogers–Glenda Steven Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

2. Sara Lee Berkman to Mrs. William B. Goldstein, January 4, 1956; Mrs. William B. Goldstein to Rosalynd J. Fisher, February 4, 1956; National Council of Jewish Women Papers, 1946–68, and undated, Linn-Henley Research Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

3. Executive Committee Meeting on the Segregation Issue, April 1956, National Council of Jewish Women Papers.

4. *Southern Frontier* 6, no. 11 (December 1945); Lee Polansky, paper delivered on Rhoda Kaufman at Southern Jewish Historical Society Conference, October 28–30, 1993; John Egerton, *Speak Now against the Day: The Generation before the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 227–28.

5. Goldfield, *Race, Region, and Cities,* 159.

6. Ruth A. McClure to Jessie Daniel Ames, September 15, 1936, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, reel 2; Goldfield, *Region, Race, and Cities,* 159.

7. Ralph McGill, *The South and the Southerner* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), 54–55; Rebecca Gershon obituary, *Atlanta Journal,* April 23, 1987.

8. Rebecca Gershon obituary; Jacqueline Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 178; Jessie Daniel Ames, *Southern Women Look at Lynching* (Atlanta: Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, 1937), 29; Josephine Heyman interview, Jewish Women of Achievement Oral History Project, 80, Atlanta Jewish Community Archives; Shankman and Wright, "Two Southerners Who Made a Difference," 24.

9. *Southern Israelite,* April 10, 1931; *Southern Frontier* 5, no. 3 (March 1944).

10. Howard N. Rabinowitz, *The First New South, 1865–1920* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1992), 172; Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 158–59, 199. I readily admit that these conclusions are extremely tentative. This clearly is a subject in need of further attention from historians.

11. E. Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1979), 119–21; Tony Freyer, *The Little Rock Crisis: A Constitutional Interpretation* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 87–114; Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound,* 12–13; C. Vann Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow,* 166–67.

12. Report of Secret Agent Paul L. Scott, November 2, 1957, FBI Little Rock Crisis Reports, series 1, box 1, file 8; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* October 31, 1958.

13. Nat Griswold, "The Second Reconstruction in Little Rock," 23–25, 1968. I am extremely grateful to John Kirk for making this material available to me.

14. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* October 31, 1958.

15. Freyer, *The Little Rock Crisis,* 139–54

16. Ibid., 154–55; David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 115; Irene Samuel, transcript of interview with John Luter, December 30, 1970, Eisenhower Administration Project, UALR.

17. Irene Samuel, interview with author, June 9, 1994; LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 376; Spitzberg, *Racial Politics in Little Rock,* 92. LeMaster incorrectly identifies Irene Samuel as being Jewish.

18. Samuel interview; Joe and Carolyn Tenenbaum interview.

19. Samuel interview; transcript of interview with Irene Samuel, Arkansas Women's History Collection, series 1, box 3, UALR.

20. Samuel interview; "Samples of anonymous letters received by Mrs. Brewer," box 1, folder 1, Women's Emergency Committee Papers, 1958–63, Arkansas History Commission.

21. Frank Winburne, interviewed by Special Agents James R. Graham Jr. and John M. Moore, September 27, 1957, FBI Little Rock Crisis Reports, series 5: box 1, file 19; *Arkansas Gazette,* December 13, 1957.

22. Samuel interview; Joe and Carolyn Tenenbaum interview.

23. Freyer, *The Little Rock Crisis,* 156–59.

24. Ibid., 160–62.

25. Ibid., 162–63; Dixie Partisans for States' Rights and Individual Liberties, circular addressed "Mr. Little Rock Voter," May 20, 1959, box 16, folder 8, Women's Emergency Committee Papers.

26. Morton Inger, "The New Orleans School Crisis of 1960," in *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation,* ed. Elizabeth Jacoway and David R. Colburn (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 84–85; Kim Lacy Rogers, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 33–35, 61–65; McMillen, *Citizens' Council,* 59–65.

27. "Plans and Program for Save Our Schools, Inc.," New Orleans, Louisiana, July 1, 1961–December 31, 1961, 2, Mathilde Dreyfous Papers, box 1, folder 1, manuscripts section, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University; *New Orleans States-Item,* April 27, 1960; Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes,* 226.

28. Rosa Freeman Keller, autobiography (c.1977), 1:57, Rosa Freeman Keller Collection, 1961–63, folder 11, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University; Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes,* 207, 209, 224.

29. Gladys Cahn to Dr. Rivers Frederick, January 29, 1954, and memorandum to NAACP, January 29, 1954, Rivers Frederick Papers, 1874–1954, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University; Rogers, *Righteous Lives,* 66. Cahn was responsible for liaison with other liberal organizations in the South, as evidenced by the regular updates on the school situation which she provided the Southern Regional Council. Paul M. Rilling, director of field activities, to Cahn, August 4, 1959; Harold C. Fleming, executive director, to Cahn, September 10, 1959; Cahn to Rilling, November 10 and December 4, 1959, series 1, reel 144, 0154–0157, 0160, 0163, Southern Regional Council Papers.

30. "Plans and Programs for Save Our Schools, Inc.," 1; Rogers, *Righteous Lives,* 66, 159, 162, 208.

31. Powell, "When Hate Came to Town," 393–94, 400; Feibelman, *A Social and Economic Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community,* 43; Rosen, "A Study of Jewish Leadership in New Orleans," 52–53; Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.,* 809. Another Jewish male involved in SOS was Leonard Dreyfus, who sat on its board of directors.

32. "Plans and Programs for Save Our Schools, Inc.," 7; *Jewish Ledger,* September 2,

1960; Fairclough, *Race and Democracy,* 237, 254, 244, 324; Powell, "When Hate Came to Town," 401–2.

33. Rogers, *Righteous Lives,* 70–73; Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes,* 226; *Carolina Israelite,* November–December 1960. SOS was inundated with angry letters, many from people who returned circulars distributed by the organization. "Please quit bothering me with your integrationist hype," read one. "I am entirely out of sympathy with your program," stated another, "and will combat it every opportunity I get." Undated and unsigned letter; Milton P. Burke, letter of October 18, 1960, Save Our Schools, Inc.," New Orleans, Louisiana Records, 1957–63, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

34. Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes,* 227–29.

35. Barbara Phillips, transcript of oral interview, Oral History Collection, UALR.

36. *Mississippi Clarion-Ledger,* March 5, March 27, 1963; *Jackson Daily News,* August 20, 1964; *Clarion-Ledger/Jackson Daily News,* December 4, 1966; Bea Gotthelf, interview with author, March 14, 1994. No papers appear to exist for the Jackson section of the PAW or any of its counterparts across the South. Bea Gotthelf almost caused the author heart failure when she informed him that she had long ago thrown away all the materials related to the organization's wing in Jackson.

37. Helen Mervis and Jane Buchsbaum, transcript of oral interviews, November 18, November 28, 1978, Kim Lacy Rogers–Glenda Stevens Collection; Selma Lewis, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt,* 196.

38. Barbara Phillips, transcript of oral interview; Gotthelf interview; Crystal interview; Jane Buchsbaum, transcript of oral interview.

39. LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 378; Jane Buchsbaum, transcript of oral interview; Rogers, *Righteous Lives,* 30–31. Jane Mendel declined to be interviewed in connection with this project.

40. Crystal interview; Gotthelf interview; Sidney Geiger, interview with author, March 11, 1994; John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 228; Jack Nelson, *Terror in the Night: The Klan's Campaign against the Jews* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 38–39, 43.

41. Crystal interview; *Memphis Commercial Appeal,* October 7, 1968; "Emergency!!! Alert!!! Act Now!!!" circular printed by Americans for the Preservation of the White Race, Integration 1967–69 folder, Mississippi State Archives, Jackson; James W. Loewen and Charles Sallis, eds., *Mississippi: Conflict and Change* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 257.

42. Crystal interview.

43. Greenberg, "The Southern Jewish Community," 142; Mohl, "South of the South?" 11–14.

44. William Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 153–54.

45. Myra Dreifus interview with Joan Beifuss and David Yellin, October 30, 1968, Memphis Multi-Media Archival Project: The 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike, series 3: container 21, folder 61, Mississippi Valley Collection, John Willard Brister Library, Memphis State University; Myra Dreifus and Selma Lewis, interview with David Yellin, January 16, 1969, ibid., folder 62; various newspaper clippings, Myra Dreifus Papers, Mississippi Valley Collection.

46. Benjamin Muse, Alabama memorandum, 1953–54; Longenecker, *Selma's Peacemaker,* 91; J. L. Chestnut Jr. and Julia Cass, *Black in Selma: The Uncommon Life of J. L. Chestnut Jr.* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990), 222.

47. Muse, Alabama memorandum, 1953; Muriel Lewis, interview with author, March 1, 1994; *Montgomery Journal,* January 22, 1963.

48. Lewis interview.

49. Letters of J. N. Williams and Muriel Lewis, *Selma Times-Journal,* March 14, March 16, 1965.

50. Fager, *Selma, 1965,* 181–82.

51. Lewis interview; *Time,* April 2, 1965.

52. Lewis interview; Fager, *Selma, 1965,* 183–84.

53. Myra Dreifus, interview with Joan Beifuss and David Yellin; Elaine Crystal interview; Rogers, *Righteous Lives,* 30–31; Jane Buchsbaum, transcript of oral interview; Bea Gotthelf interview.

54. Lewis interview; cemetery records, Selma Public Library.

55. Crystal interview; Myra Dreifus, interview with Joan Beifuss and David Yellin; Berkley Kalin, An Oral History of the Memphis Jewish Community: Interview with Dr. James A. Wax, May 28, 1970, Oral History Research Office, Memphis State University; Muriel Lewis interview.

8. THE RABBIS

1. Blumberg, *One Voice,* 68. The divisions among delegates are also recounted in Roland Gittelsohn, "If I Were Invited Back to Birmingham," *Crisis* 64, no. 2 (February 1957): 83–84.

2. Krause, "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South."

3. For an excellent insight into the theological defense of segregation, see David L. Chappell, "Religious Ideas of the Segregationists," *Journal of American Studies* 32, no. 2 (1998): 237–62. See also Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice like a Trumpet,* 39–40, 46.

4. Silver, *Mississippi,* 131. Schultz later wrote that his opposition to "Federal usurpation" was "part of a philosophy and is not 'anti-Negro.'" As evidence of his support for the civil rights movement, he cited his invitation to deliver the eulogy at a memorial service for Martin Luther King Jr., which was attended by 1,500 black and white mourners. Rabbi Benjamin Schultz to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, March 25, 1971, American Jewish Archives; *Clarksdale Press-Register,* April 8, 1968.

5. Bauman and Kalin, *Quiet Voices,* 9–10.

6. Mark K. Bauman, *Harry H. Epstein and the Rabbinate as Conduit for Change* (London: Associated University Presses, 1994), 8–9, 44, 58, 74–77, 93, 108. Although Epstein was unusual, thanks to the work of Leonard Rogoff we now know that he was not the only Orthodox rabbi to speak out against segregation. See Rogoff, "Divided Together: Jews and African Americans in Durham, North Carolina," in *Quiet Voices,* ed. Bauman and Kalin, 203–4, for details on Rabbi Louis Tuchman.

7. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* December 19, 1958.

8. *Richmond Planet,* May 13, 1899.

9. On Marx, see *Atlanta Constitution,* September 10, 1901; and Mark K. Bauman and Arnold Shankman, "The Rabbi as Ethnic Broker: The Case of David Marx," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 2 (spring 1983). On Fineshriber, see Berkley Kalin, "The Early Concern of Rabbi Fineshriber," *Delta Review* (June 1969): 42–44, 55; Berkley Kalin, "Rabbi William H. Fineshriber: The Memphis Years," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers,* no. 25 (1971): 47–62. Heller was also an active member of the NAACP. See *Crisis* 1, no. 6 (April 1911): 14; and subject file: Lynching—General 1914, box C-336, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, administrative files.

10. Stanley R. Brav, *Dawn of Reckoning: Self-Portrait of a Liberal Rabbi* (Cincinnati: Sholom Press, 1971), 169–81; Rabbi Albert Friedlander interview; Chester M. Morgan, *Redneck Liberal: Theodore G. Bilbo and the New Deal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 238.

11. Fairclough, *Race and Democracy,* 81.

12. This chapter cannot include the story of every southern rabbi involved in the struggle against racial segregation. Most conspicuously, it omits detailed discussion of Rabbi James Wax, who played an influential role in the Memphis sanitation workers' strike of 1968. See Patricia M. LaPointe, "The Prophetic Voice: Rabbi James A. Wax," in *Quiet Voices,* ed. Bauman and Kalin, 152–67.

13. Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice like a Trumpet,* 20–21, 32.

14. "Rabbi Ira E. Sanders," Nearprint Box—Biographies, American Jewish Archives; Ira Sanders Papers, 1917–82, UALR.

15. Blumberg, *One Voice.*

16. *Jewish Floridian,* May 22, 1960; Perry Nussbaum, Nearprint Box—Biographies, American Jewish Archives; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* January 29, 1965.

17. "Biographical Sketch of Rabbi Perry E. Nussbaum," April 1967, 2, Perry Nussbaum, Nearprint Box—Biographies; Rabbi Ira E. Sanders, interview with Charlotte Gadberry, December 5, 1977, 12–13, Oral History Collection, UALR; *Arkansas Democrat,* May 11, 1974.

18. Julian B. Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi* (New York: Vantage Press, 1980), 3–25; Charles Mantinband, "In Dixieland I Take My Stand," undated manuscript, Charles Mantinband Papers, 1923–68, American Jewish Archives.

19. Rabbi Elijah E. Palnick, interview with author; Palnick, "Southern Jewry and Civil Rights," 64.

20. Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice like a Trumpet,* 40.

21. Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi,* 447. Feibelman also stressed that racism was regional, not global. See *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* March 12, 1957.

22. Sanders interview, December 5, 1977, 10–12; *Arkansas Democrat,* May 11, 1974; Mrs. B. J. Reaves to Jessie D. Ames, September 29, 1936, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, 1919–44, reel 2, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University; membership report blank, June 12, 1934, and Mrs. L. H. Porter to William Pickens, January 26, 1939, Papers of the NAACP, part 12, selected branch files, 1913–39, series A: The South, reel 5, series G, branch file; group 1, box G-12 (Little Rock); Urban League of Greater Little Rock, Survey, 1941; Sanders interview, December 5, 1977, 17.

23. *Arkansas Gazette,* February 17, February 19, 1957.

24. *Arkansas Gazette,* February 19, 1957; Edwin Dunaway, interview with author, 15 June 1994; Rabbi Ira Sanders, address to Arkansas legislature, box 1, file 15, Little Rock School Integration Crisis, 1957, Ira Sanders Papers, UALR; Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1987), 54.

25. Robert R. Brown, *Bigger than Little Rock* (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, SPCK, 1958), 91–97; *Arkansas Democrat,* October 4, 1957.

26. General details from box 1, file 2: History and Purpose, Greater Little Rock Conference on Religion and Human Relations, UALR. Also, "Confronting the Little Rock Housing Problem," undated report, box 1, file 4: Position Papers.

27. LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry,* 352–53; *Arkansas Gazette,* June 25, 1968.

28. *Arkansas Gazette,* November 11, 1969; Walker interview; Palnick interview with author, February 28, 1994.

29. *Arkansas Gazette,* January 18, 1970; Palnick interview; Walker interview.

30. *Arkansas Gazette,* October 13, 1970.

31. Palnick interview; Tenenbaum interview; Sutton interview; Walker interview; *Arkansas Democrat,* July 2, 1971.

32. Rabbi Julian Feibelman, oral interview, November 7, 1978, Kim Lacy Rogers–Glenda Stevens Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University; Berkley Kalin, "An Oral History of the Jewish Community in the South: Interview with Julian Feibelman," November 8, 1968, transcript, 3–4, Oral History Research Office, Memphis State University; Julian Feibelman, interview with Allen Krause regarding the role of the rabbis in the civil rights movement in the South, June 24, 1966, cassette recording, American Jewish Archives.

33. Rogers, *Righteous Lives,* 33–36; Morton Inger, "The New Orleans School Crisis of 1960," 84; McMillen, *Citizens' Council,* 64.

34. Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi,* 449–450; Fairclough, *Race and Democracy,* 177; *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* September 13, 1955; *Southern Patriot,* 13, no. 8 (October 1955).

35. Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi,* 459.

36. Jacob M. Rothschild to Balfour Brickner, October 12, 1961, box 5, folder 8, Rothschild Papers; Blumberg, *One Voice,* 62.

37. Perry Nussbaum, Charles Mantinband, and Jacob M. Rothschild, "The Southern Rabbi Faces the Problem of Desegregation," *CCAR Journal,* no. 14 (June 1956): 5–6.

38. Harold C. Fleming to Jacob M. Rothschild, January 6, 1958, box 3, folder 8, Rothschild Papers.

39. *Columbus Enquirer,* February 19, 1947; *New York Times,* January 5, 1957; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* January 6, 1957.

40. *Southern Jewish Weekly,* October 10, 1958; *Richmond African American,* October 11, 1958; Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry," 240.

41. Tyler, *Silk Stockings and Ballot Boxes,* 220–21.

42. Gary Phillip Zola, "What Price Amos? Perry Nussbaum's Career in Jackson, Mississippi," in *Quiet Voices,* ed. Bauman and Kalin, 241–44.

43. Meier and Rudwick, *CORE,* 139–40; Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound,* 55–60.

44. Meier and Rudwick, *CORE,* 141; Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound,* 61–62; *The Citizens' Council,* June 1961. Copy housed by the Special Collections Department of the Howard Tilton Library at Tulane University.

45. Martinson, "Prison Notes of a Freedom Rider," 6; Peter B. Levy, *Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992), 81.

46. Perry E. Nussbaum to Albert Vorspan, September 28, 1961; Nussbaum to Jacob R. Marcus, October 23, 1961. Both letters in folder labeled "Freedom Riders" in Mississippi 1961, Manuscripts Collection, American Jewish Archives; Nelson, *Terror in the Night,* 40–43. Nussbaum also expressed his skepticism to Lawrence Goldmark, a student rabbi serving his apprenticeship at a small town synagogue in Mississippi. As Goldmark later wrote, Nussbaum "was not at all sympathetic with the Northern Rabbis who came into his part of the country, stirred up a hornet's nest of troubles and returned to the safe confines of their congregations in the North." Lawrence J. Goldmark, "Incident in Mississippi," *Jewish Digest* 19 (January 1974): 31.

47. Mantinband, "Rabbi in the Deep South," 4.

48. Jacob M. Rothschild to Charles Mantinband, April 14, 1964, box 6, folder 4; Rothschild to Albert Vorspan, June 8, 1961, box 5, folder 8; Vorspan to Rothschild, June 14, 1961, box 5, folder 8, Rothschild Papers.

49. Ed King, interview with author, March 23, 1994. Estimates vary as to the actual number of Jews incarcerated at Parchman. Mantinband suggested that the figure was between thirty and fifty. Mantinband, "The Magnolia State," manuscript, Charles Mantinband Papers.

50. Perry E. Nussbaum, circulated letter of August 24, 1961, "Freedom Riders" in Mississippi 1961.

51. Dan Stevens to Perry E. Nussbaum, September 20, 1961; H. D. Prensky to Nussbaum, August 8, 1961. Both letters in "Freedom Riders" in Mississippi 1961.

52. Perry E. Nussbaum to Albert Vorspan, September 28, 1961; Rabbi Allan H. Schwartzman to Nussbaum, August 2, 1961; Rabbi M. M. Landau to Nussbaum, August 3, 1961. All three letters in "Freedom Riders" in Mississippi 1961. The information about Schwartzman's guarded support for the Mississippi Council on Human Relations is from a letter written by that organization's vice president to its secretary. Rabbi Charles Mantinband to Rev. Donald Thompson, January 7, 1963, Mississippi Council on Human Relations Papers, box 21, folder: "Mississippi Council on Human Relations," Mississippi State Archives, Jackson, Mississippi.

53. Perry E. Nussbaum to Fred Jones, October 15, 1961, "Freedom Riders" in Mississippi 1961.

54. Sutker, "Jews of Atlanta," 271–76; Shankman, "A Temple Is Bombed," 129. The reaction to the Temple bombing is discussed in more detail in chapter 3. For relatively rare examples of hate mail received by Rothschild, see Frances M. Blaser to Rothschild, box 3, folder 5; and T. H. Mell to Rothschild, 7 October 1957, box 3, folder 6, Rothschild Papers.

55. Marc Dollinger, "'Hamans' and 'Torquemadas': Southern and Northern Jewish Responses to the Civil Rights Movement, 1945–1965," in *Quiet Voices,* ed. Bauman and Kalin, 72–73.

56. Clarence Scheps to Julian Feibelman, September 14, 1955, box 29, folder 5, Julian B. Feibelman Papers, American Jewish Archives.

57. Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi,* 451–452; Fairclough, *Race and Democracy,* 202; Feibelman to Stanley Diffenthal, September 16, 1955; "One who is for segregation forever" to Feibelman, September 13, 1955. Both letters in box 29, folder 5, Feibelman Papers.

58. Paulsen Spence to Feibelman, September 21, 1955; "Old S.S. Trooper" to Feibelman, September [?] 1955; undated and unsigned to Feibelman. All letters in box 29, folder 5, Feibelman Papers. Other warnings included this one from "Old Black Joe" of Evansville, Indiana, dated September 22, 1955: "Why don't you Jews and dissatisfied black [*sic*] start a pilgrimage to Africa, you all will never be happy in U.S.A."

59. Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi,* 452, 455.

60. *Social Action in Review* 6, no. 1 (October–November 1958); postcard dated October 1, 1958, and signed "A real Virginian," Emmet A. Frank, newspaper clippings, letters, etc., from anti- and pro-segregationists commenting on Rabbi Frank's sermon on the desegregation issue, Alexandria, Virginia, 23 September 1958, American Jewish Archives Small Collections.

61. *Washington Post,* October 25, 1958.

62. Anna Kest Mantinband, "Time for Remembering," unpublished ms., 1979, American Jewish Archives Small Collections, 69–70.

63. Nussbaum, letter of October 1, 1967, marked "Personal" and addressed "Dear

Friends," Temple Beth Israel Archives, Jackson, Mississippi; "The Bomb," transcript of sermon delivered by Nussbaum on Rosh Hashonah Eve, 1967, Temple Beth Israel Archives; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* October 20, 1967; *Southern Israelite,* December 1, 1967. A comprehensive account of the synagogue bombing and subsequent events is provided by Nelson, *Terror in the Night.*

64. *Southern Israelite,* December 1, 1967; Nelson, *Terror in the Night,* 69–70; Nossiter, *Of Long Memory,* 139; Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 104–5.

65. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* October 20, 1967; *Southern Israelite,* December 1, 1967.

66. Lil Burnstein, interview with author, March 12, 1994; Perry Nussbaum, circular to the past presidents, president, and vice president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, September 19, 1968, Abraham Jehiel Feldman Papers, American Jewish Archives.

67. Dollinger, "'Hamans' and 'Torquemadas,'" 72.

68. Mrs. Ruth L. Berlinsky to Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, September 26, 1957, box 3, folder 5, Rothschild Papers; *Atlanta Constitution,* October 7, 1957; Rothschild to Dr. Alfred A. Weinstein, October 9, 1957, box 3, folder 6, Rothschild Papers.

69. Blumberg, *One Voice,* 63–64, 57; Bill Breman, transcript of oral interview, January 7, 1990, 38, Atlanta Jewish Community Archives; Lowell Lehman to Hugh Hodgson, August 6, 1963, box 6, folder 2, Rothschild Papers.

70. Jacob M. Rothschild to Rabbi Solomon S. Bernards, October 18, 1963, box 6, folder 3, Rothschild Papers. Rothschild was more likely to receive criticism from Jews living in smaller towns in other parts of the state. In March 1958, a letter arrived from Norman Goldburg of Augusta, criticizing the rabbi for endangering Jews who lived in less liberal communities than Atlanta. "If there must be statements and resolutions and all that," pleaded Goldburg, "let the local Rabbis work with Protestants and Catholics. Not alone. Never alone." Goldburg to Rothschild, March 1958, box 3, folder 9, Rothschild Papers.

71. Reissman, "The New Orleans Jewish Community," 110–12, 117; Feibelman, *A Social and Economic Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community,* 134–36; Rosen, "A Study of Jewish Leadership in New Orleans," 52–54.

72. Julian Feibelman, interview with Allen Krause, June 24, 1966; Feibelman, *Making of a Rabbi,* 455; George Chaplin to Rabbi Julian Feibelman, September 28, 1955, box 29, folder 5, Julian B. Feibelman Papers; *Jewish Ledger,* July 23, 1954, 16 September 1960. In its edition of May 28, 1954, the *Ledger* reported that national Jewish organizations had championed the Supreme Court decision, but gave no indication as to whether it approved of this or not.

73. Rosen, "A Study of Jewish Leadership in New Orleans, Louisiana," 112–14.

74. Rabbi Julian Feibelman, oral interview, November 7, 1978, Kim Lacy Roger–Glenda Stevens Collection; Julian Feibelman, interview with Allen Krause, June 24,

1966; David P. Levy to Feibelman, September 15, 1955; Stanley M. Dissenthal to Feibelman, September 15, 1955; both letters in box 29, folder 5, Feibelman Papers.

75. Feibelman to David P. Levy, September 19, 1955, box 29, folder 5, Feibelman Papers; Feibelman, interview with Allen Krause, June 24, 1966.

76. King interview; Nelson, *Terror in the Night,* 34; Nussbaum, Mantinband, and Rothschild, "The Southern Rabbi Faces the Problem of Desegregation," 2. Those members of the congregation with whom the author spoke all testified to the almost total assimilation of the city's Jews.

77. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* February 14, 1958; Irwin Schulman, personal and confidential memorandum to Arnold Forster, June 7, 1963, box 6, folder 1, Women's Emergency Committee Papers, 1958–63, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock.

78. Nussbaum, Mantinband, and Rothschild, "The Southern Rabbi Faces the Problem of Desegregation," 3; Crystal interview; Bea Gotthelf interview.

79. *Washington Post,* October 25, 1958, September 11, 1965.

80. Mrs. I. Richard Levet and David Glil, undated letters to Rabbi Emmet Frank; Emmet A. Frank, newspaper clippings, letters, etc.

81. *Southern Jewish Weekly,* October 24, 1958; *Washington Post,* September 11, 1965.

82. Rabbi Ira Sanders, undated address to rabbinical audience, box 1, file 3: Sermons, Addresses, and Lectures, Ira Sanders Papers, UALR; Joel C. Dobin, "Portrait of a Southern Community," *Congress Weekly* 25, no. 9 (April 28, 1958): 8–9; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* November 1, 1957; *Southern Jewish Weekly,* May 16, 1958; *Southern Israelite,* September 12, 1958.

83. Charles Mantinband, "From the Diary of a Mississippi Rabbi," *American Judaism* 12, no. 2 (1963): 9.

84. Esther Shemper and Lou Ginsberg interviews; *Jewish Monitor* 14, no. 9 (May 1962): 12–13; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* April 27, 1962.

85. "Hattiesburg 'Freedom Day' Set for January 22," SNCC memorandum for immediate release, January 18, 1964, box 135, folder 5, Paul B. Johnson Family Papers.

86. Supplemental Report—Forrest County—Hattiesburg Voter Registration Demonstrations, January 31, 1964, box 135, folder 5, Paul B. Johnson Family Papers.

87. *New Orleans States-Item,* December 26, 1964. The story of the Freedom Summer has been chronicled in considerable detail. Among the most informative works available are Holt, *The Summer That Didn't End,* and Rothschild, *A Case of Black and White.*

88. Rabbi Morris B. Margolies, quoted in *Jewish Monitor* 16, no. 11 (July 1964): 57.

89. Fairley interview; *New Orleans States-Item,* December 26, 1964; *Hattiesburg American,* July 25, 1964.

90. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* January 29, 1965; "The Rabbi of Civil Rights," *Carolina Israelite,* January–February 1965.

91. *Southern Israelite,* December 25, 1964; *Jewish Monitor* 16, no. 5 (January 1965): 4.

92. *Hattiesburg American,* December 23, 1964, January 13, 1965.

93. Cohen et al., "A Public Dialogue—Jewish Young Freedom Fighters," 23; *Southern Israelite,* December 25, 1964; *Jewish Monitor,* January 1965. The *Monitor* noted that a number of those who served on the local Salvation Army's advisory board were also members of Ben-Ami's congregation.

94. Box 110, folder 6, Paul B. Johnson Family Papers; Cunnigen, "The Mississippi State Advisory Committee," 15; Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1993), 45.

95. Charles Mantinband to Jacob Marcus, December 1960, Mantinband Papers; Silver, *Mississippi,* 131.

96. Brown, *Bigger than Little Rock,* 98. Details of the hoax bomb threat can be found in chapter 8.

97. Harmon, "Beneath the Image," 206–8; Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry," 239; Krause, "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South," 38.

98. Mays, *Born to Rebel,* 261–63; Clayton, *I've Been Marching All the Time,* 148; Martin Luther King Jr. to Jacob M. Rothschild, March 8, 1965, box 6, folder 7, Rothschild Papers. Civil rights activist Xenona Clayton has testified to the important contribution of Archbishop Hallinan and Rabbi Rothschild in improving race relations in Atlanta. They are the only two clergymen, along with King himself, to be included in her list of the city's most "remarkable" civil rights leaders. Clayton, *I've Been Marching All the Time,* 139.

99. Perry E. Nussbaum to Albert Vorspan, September 28, 1961, "Freedom Riders" in Mississippi.

100. *Mississippi Clarion-Ledger,* May 19, May 20, 1962; Silver, *Mississippi,* 59; Nussbaum, Mantinband, and Rothschild, "The Southern Rabbi," 1, 3; Perry E. Nussbaum, "And Then There Was One—In the Capital City of Mississippi," *CCAR Journal* (July 1963): 16–17; King interview.

101. Nussbaum to Rothschild, October 1, 1963; Rothschild to Nussbaum, October 9, 1963; Nussbaum to Rothschild, October 10, 1963, box 6, folder 3, Rothschild Papers.

102. Palnick interview.

103. Charles Mantinband to Emmet Frank, October 9, 1958; William Silverman to Emmet Frank, 8 October 1958, Emmet A. Frank, newspaper clippings, letters, etc., on the desegregation issue.

104. Nussbaum to Rothschild, October 13, 1958, box 3, folder 10; Rothschild to Nussbaum, November 24, 1967, box 8, folder 2, Rothschild Papers.

105. Nussbaum to Rothschild, October 1, 1963, box 6, folder 3, Rothschild Papers.

106. Levi A. Olan to Nussbaum, September 30, 1968, box 15, folder 13, Levi A. Olan Papers, 1924–83, American Jewish Archives.

107. The three rabbis also coauthored an article about their experiences, although their contributions were penned individually. Nussbaum, Mantinband, and Rothschild, "The Problem of Desegregation," 1–6.

108. Mantinband to Golden, January 21, 1961, Mantinband Papers.

109. Nussbaum to Mantinband, August 22, 1958, Mantinband Papers; Bea Gotthelf, interview with author. Mrs. Gotthelf remembers Nussbaum and Mantinband at meetings of the MCHR and agrees that the two men were "philosophically" close. As to their personal relationship, she confesses her ignorance.

110. Dr. Ernst Borinski, transcripts of oral interviews with John Jones, December 9, 1979, March 9, 1980, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Rosellen Brown, "Stirring Things Up," *Life,* April 1993, 87; Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow,* 117–25; King interview.

111. King interview; Owens interview; Clay interview.

112. Charles Mantinband to Harry Golden, December 19, 1963, Mantinband Papers.

113. Milton L. Grafman, Nearprint Box—Biographies, American Jewish Archives.

114. *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* February 17, 1956; Jerome Cooper, interview with author, February 9, 1994.

115. *Birmingham World,* February 14, 1956; *National Jewish Post and Opinion,* February 17, February 24, 1956; Kate Pierce, "The Communicator," *Birmingham* 23 (August 1983): 64.

116. Rabbi Milton L. Grafman, interview with author, February 16, 1994; Nichols, "'Cities Are What Men Make Them,'" 209–10.

117. Grafman, interview with author. The attempted dynamiting of Temple Beth-Or is discussed in chapter 3.

118. Charles Mantinband to Harry Golden, December 19, 1963.

119. Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 113–14.

120. *Jewish Monitor* 15, no. 8 (April 1963): 1, 1B.

121. Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail" (Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, 1963).

122. Gardner interview; Addine Drew interview; Dukes interview.

123. Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie,* 170; Karl Friedman to Larry Brook, September 15, 1993, copy of letter in possession of the author; Grafman interview.

124. Friedman interview; Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie,* 171.

125. Grafman interview; Elovitz, *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie,* 170.

126. Dukes interview; Gardner interview; Rabbi Richard W. Winograd to Stanley F. Chyet, October 31, 1963, 3–4, American Jewish Archives; Rabbi Isaac Freeman to Chyet, January 15, 1964, 4, American Jewish Archives Small Collections.

127. Grafman interview.

128. Eileen Walbert and Addine Drew interview; Fred Goldstein, interview with author.

129. Grafman interview; Kate Pierce, "The Communicator," 66; "Clergyman Defends Stand," *Birmingham News,* June 5, 1989, 1B, 5B.

130. Kate Pierce, "The Communicator," 66; Grafman interview; *Birmingham Post-Herald,* October 10, 1964. The Klan dropped its action against Grafman after its attorney died in a car accident.

131. The congregation responded immediately. Many helped raised donations to the reward fund established by the mayor. Businessman Mervyn Sterne made a personal pledge of $1,000. Rabbi Milton Grafman, interview with author; Frank Sikora, *Until Justice Rolls Down: The Birmingham Church Bombing Case* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 26.

132. Tony Badger, "Fatalism, Not Gradualism: The Crisis of Southern Liberalism, 1945–65," in *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement,* ed. Brian Ward and Tony Badger (London: Macmillan, 1996), 67–95.

133. King interview with *Playboy,* January 1965, quoted in Washington, *Testament of Hope,* 344.

134. *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* November 25, 1973.

135. Rothschild to Martin Luther King Jr., September 7, 1967, box 8, folder 1, Rothschild Papers.

136. King to Rothschild, September 28, 1967, box 8, folder 1, Rothschild Papers.

137. Kivie Kaplan to Rothschild, May 3, 1972; Rothschild to Kaplan, May 15, 1972, box 8, folder 1, Rothschild Papers. Rothschild expressed his own forgiveness of Young by referring to him as "Andy."

138. Rothschild to Rabbi Alfred Goodman, January 30, 1969; Goodman to Rothschild, February 3, 1969, box 8, folder 7, Rothschild Papers; *Detroit Jewish News,* November 22, 1968.

139. Cecil Alexander, transcript of oral interview, box 109, folder 1, Ralph Emerson McGill Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

CONCLUSION

1. Kaufman, *Broken Alliance,* 76–77; Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America,* 212–13.

2. Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America,* 194–95; Levinson, "Different Lives in a Different Region," 46.

3. W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (1941; New York: Vintage, 1991), 333–34.

4. Goldfield, *Region, Race, and Cities,* 154–55.

5. Carson, "Black-Jewish Universalism in the Era of Identity Politics," 181–82.

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